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THE

ENTERPRISING IMPRESARIO.

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ENTERPRISING IMPRESARIO.

BY

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"Please to remember this is *talk;* just as easy and just as formal as I choose to make it."—O. W. HOLMES, "*Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*"

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THE

ENTERPRISING IMPRESARIO.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT are we going to talk about? An Impresario! What can that be? Many may have a dim recollection of having somewhere met with one; all who take any interest in the question, and do not understand the meaning of the word, will, if their curiosity carry them so far, turn to the nearest Italian dictionary, and look it out. Ten to one if they find it—should they do so, the explanation will probably be as it is in Graglia's, thus—

> Impresario, *s. m.*, one who undertakes a public job—the manager of a theatre:

according to which definition our hero may be a Member of Parliament—a much-abused promoter

—an undertaker pure and simple—or, in short, any individual who interests himself or is concerned in the management of (as Graglia elegantly says) "a public job." It will, however, suit the present purpose to adopt the latter part of the definition as it stands, and acknowledge at once that our Impresario is neither more nor less than a theatrical manager, who is indebted to some good-natured critic for the flattering appellation which stands at the head of these pages.

It is difficult to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion as to the special attributes of the professional Impresario. It is hard to say what particular curriculum of study is necessary to qualify him for his vocation; whether he ever or never was under the fostering wing of Alma Mater. The lawyer, in his course of hard work, acquires what is known as the "legal mind." The physician in his professional pursuits forms certain habits and mannerisms by which he is easily recognised. The City merchant, whether in counting-house or country-house, is not to be mistaken; but an Impresario, unless he be a vocalist or actor

who has gone into the "undertaking line," defies the most acute observer of men and manners to say off-hand what he is, and how he makes his money—the latter, by the way, a question sometimes difficult even for himself to answer.

A thorough knowledge of his business should include experience in painting, to enable him to judge correctly of the scenic effects of the stage and expenses of the painting-room; taste in music and the drama, correct appreciation of the abilities of those to be engaged, whether singers, actors, dancers, or instrumentalists; and if he would properly economise, he should have an acute idea of the value of silks, satins, and other articles required in the theatrical wardrobe. Taking him for all in all, the Impresario is an anomaly; never at rest and yet an idle man; selfish, but continually promoting the success of others; worshipped when sought after, to be, when found, remorselessly tormented. He leads the most anxious life, and can nevertheless indulge in venison and champagne, while others make his fortune; he is at once the most despotic ruler and submissive slave; the "super" trembles at his nod, while he is kneeling at the

Prima Donna's feet. He is the incarnation of unlimited liability. He is liable to the public, liable to the artists, liable to Government, liable to proprietors, liable, in short, to everything and everybody except himself. By nature amphibious; at times strutting proudly upon the high and dry land of prosperity, at others wallowing in the muddy waters of misfortune; equally familiar with both, he is philosophically indifferent to either. His habits are luxurious to extravagance. Whether fortune frown or smile, he keeps his carriages and horses; he is a good whip, and, if not gouty, riding is his favourite exercise.

In common with other members of the community he has, however, his *mauvais quarts d'heure.* Would you see the Impresario in trouble—a cloud of thunder on his brow—the victim of despair? Watch him when he hears that his popular primo tenore or favourite prima donna is indisposed. The opera which is drawing crowded houses has to be changed or sung by a substitute not attractive to the public. The manager may for a while have thrown the reins of government carelessly aside, a flourishing account from the Box-

office having increased his gusto for the good dinner at which he is comfortably seated. A delicate little note is handed to him,—whether from a tenor or prima donna does not signify, they both indulge in similarly diminutive-sized envelopes—it is opened; the manager turns pale as he peruses the contents; a few incoherent sentences escape his lips; his dinner, and peace of mind for at least twelve hours are irremediably ruined. The delicate little note informs him that a change of opera is unavoidable. The soup is left untouched; he hastens to the theatre; his secretary is forthwith dispatched to summon other artists; the call-boy runs for his life to the printer; instructions are given to the door-keepers, scene-shifters, in fact to the entire establishment, to prepare for the emergency. A bill is drawn up expressing the regret of the "management" (why the Impresario insists on calling himself the "management" has never been correctly ascertained) at being obliged to announce a change in the performance of the evening. The secretary returns, after a furious drive to all the outskirts of the metropolis, and finds the manager pacing his room in an agony of

disappointment and uncertainty. Sometimes the secretary has been successful, and tranquillises his chief with words of consolation. Sometimes, however, it is just the reverse; and he is the bearer of anything but satisfactory intelligence: the artists he has sought may not have been found, or, if found, are as unable to appear as the singer whose illness is the cause of all the difficulty. The Impresario is now in what is popularly called a "quandary," and uncertain whether to open the theatre or not. Generally, matters are so arranged that it is unnecessary to resort to the latter alternative: but the Impresario's nerves and temper are made to suffer in the interim. The chances are, moreover, that he is abused by the aristocratic *habitués* of the stalls and the democratic frequenters of the pit, for not keeping faith with the public: neither aristocrat nor democrat considering for one moment that it is the singer's throat that is sore, and not that of the Impresario, who would willingly sing soprano, contralto, tenor and bass, were it in his power to do so to the satisfaction of the grumblers aforesaid. Strange *contre-temps* will sometimes happen on such occasions.

Artists who were not to be found when wanted will arrive at the last moment, when others have been persuaded to sing for them. Such an occurrence actually took place at Covent Garden some years ago. Illness had necessitated a change of opera, and "Il Barbiere" was to be given instead of the one originally announced. The alteration was made at a very short notice. Ronconi, who, according to a stipulation in his engagement, had the part of the Barber allotted to him, was out of town. No other opera, under the circumstances, being practicable, Tamburini, after much coaxing, consented to sing the Figaro, and repaired to the theatre at the usual time. A few minutes before the opera was to begin, Ronconi made his appearance, and insisted upon his right to the part Tamburini had undertaken. He went to his room and dressed. As the curtain was about to be drawn up, there was Ronconi on one side of the stage and Tamburini on the other, both in the well-known costume, and ready to appear as the vivacious Figaro. Here was a chance of a "Barbiere" after the fashion of the "Corsican Brothers." It was truly a momentous question. Had the curtain

been raised, Figaro would have had a "double," which would have puzzled the audience more than even Charles Kean's famous impersonation of the De Franchis. The commencement of the opera was for a short time delayed till the matter was explained to Tamburini, who relinquished the position with the politeness of a gentleman and good feeling of a true artist. When it is considered how entirely the fulfilment of the announcement of an opera depends upon the health of the sensitive soprano or tenacious tenor, it is perhaps surprising that disappointments are not more frequent, and that an enterprising Impresario can at any time enjoy his dinner undisturbed.

He has, notwithstanding, his moments of enjoyment. If a man of taste and fond of art, he has opportunities of indulging his fancy of which but few can boast. He will find a pleasure in his pursuits, such as is the envied privilege of artists who derive profit from that which is most gratifying to their self-esteem. By the exercise of his judgment a large class of the community is influenced. The progress of music and the drama may be promoted by his exertions; he can be of more service

to rising talent than the most "distinguished patronage," and these are surely advantages upon which an Impresario may justly pride himself. His vocation is legitimate—unquestionably speculative to a certain extent, but not more so than any other business, while requiring perhaps greater judgment and experience to ensure success. Reckless speculation, whether induced by opposition or by an inordinate desire of notoriety, is not enterprise, and is as much to be censured in a theatrical Impresario as in any other "undertaker of public jobs:" perhaps in his case it is more reprehensible, when it is considered what numbers depend for their livelihood upon his careful and judicious management. The closing of a theatre, or the failure of any important undertaking for the amusement of the public, deprives many families of their weekly income, reducing them to absolute want. Singers, actors, and musicians are not the only sufferers, and they are better able to endure such a misfortune than those employed in the other departments of a theatre. By these inferior officers, the obedience paid to the Manager, or "Governor," as he is called, approaches slavery.

His orders are obeyed as implicitly and promptly as those of a despot. His sway is absolute, and he issues his edicts with the air and dignity of a monarch. A change of temper in the "Governor" is discussed by the mercenaries with fear or delight, as an important event affecting their interests and happiness. The "Governor" smiles, and the mercenaries rejoice—he frowns, and they are sad and silent. It is an evil presage, and none dare approach him till he smiles again. So complete is the submission of these servants, they will incur almost any danger or perform any duty to gratify the caprices of the manager. An instance is on record of the Impresario of an English Opera, who in a moment of hilarity wishing to play a practical joke upon the baritone of the company, desired four of his minions to carry that functionary off the stage at a given signal. The order was executed when the unsuspecting victim was singing a sentimental ballad. A man seized each arm and leg, and in spite of violent kicking and struggling, the unfortunate baritone was borne away upon the shoulders of the four servants, much to his own surprise and the bewilderment

of the audience, who had been listening to his singing thus unceremoniously interrupted. The baritone's name was Duruset—that of the Impresario need not be mentioned: it would be invidious to betray the incognito of one in these pages, which are intended to contain anecdotes of many who must remain unknown.

I have mingled in the crowd of courtiers at the "Governor's" door, waiting to be received by the successful manager, and have watched the propitiating flatteries bestowed on his private secretary —the true medium of communication with the spirit of management whose "rappings" he interprets. The private secretary alone has free access to the throne-room of the theatrical autocrat. He is at once the Peter and Cerberus of the establishment, admitting those who please him,—keeping at bay the importunate intruders. In the same antechamber I have heard the mob of hungry creditors clamour rudely for their rights, when the public was blighting all hopes of a replenished treasury by "damning" the last opera, and when, instead of smiles and compliments being bestowed on the private secretary, threats of violence, and the

rudest messages were sent through him to his lord and master. I have also seen the Impresario in court suit, knee-breeches and silk stockings, a silver candlestick in each hand, proudly receiving royalty on state occasions; and oh! I have seen him when, in accordance with slavish custom, trying to walk backwards up the treacherous stairs, miss his step and bump down in a sitting posture, candlesticks, knee-breeches and all, in the front of royalty, to the horrible confusion of himself and infinite amusement of the lookers-on.

A successful Impresario is rarely met with in the flesh, a statement which, obviously admitting of two interpretations, may safely be accepted in either sense without fear of contradiction; for prudence dictates silence concerning financial matters on the part of every manager; if he makes money it concerns nobody but himself, if he loses it the less it is talked about the better. Hence the fabulous accounts of the profits and losses in theatrical undertakings. They are usually spoken of by those who are entirely ignorant of their true character, and by them exaggerated accordingly. Theatrical and musical affairs seem to be

favourite topics with those members of society who delight in making themselves a name for exclusive information on questions of general interest.

By these valiant knights of the long bow it is considered quite justifiable to make the most malignant assertions as to the private life of any public favourite, singer or actor, male or female. They will tell you how they know for a fact that Baroski the tenor was unable to appear last week, owing to his being, *as usual*, too intoxicated to walk across the stage. Unless those be present who care to contradict the statement, it passes for reliable information, and poor Baroski's reputation suffers in consequence; whereas if the chatterer be challenged for his authority, it invariably ends in the whole story being disproved, and the listeners convinced of its injustice. The charge of inebriety is one often brought against our public singers, although none can be more slanderous and false. The more eminent their position, the more are they exposed to the accusation. A moment's reflection should, however, convince any one of common sense that

habitual drinking to excess would completely incapacitate a singer or musician from pursuing his vocation. Singers, in fact, have every reason for avoiding such a means of excitement, both for the sake of preserving their voices, as well as for sustaining their reputation with the public. Moreover, singing in itself is sufficiently exciting, and quite as much so as any vicious stimulant, which must inevitably destroy its effect. Society, however, encourages these idle tales about any artist who happens to be popular, and slander that would be resented and cried down with indignation about a private individual may with impunity be invented and circulated when its victim is any favourite of the public. Although less conspicuous in his position than the maligned tenor, our Impresario is not exempt from these attacks. He too has his traducers, though they may not take sufficient interest in his doings to invent stories personally affecting him. Success or failure is the standard by which he is judged. If triumphant, he's the cleverest fellow in the world; if the reverse, he's the greatest fool. In either case, he is at any rate as necessary a

part of any public performance as music, actors, or musicians. Without a "Management" no theatre can be opened, no amusement afforded to the public, and whether it consist of a Board (which is rarely the case and never long so), or is mysteriously represented by an "unknown quantity" such as an Impresario, it must exist, or a theatrical undertaking can have no being.

CHAPTER II.

THE transient nature of the Impresario's "stock in trade" is the most melancholy feature of his calling. Evanescence would seem to be as inseparable an attribute of the fame of all who are in any way connected with music or the drama as it is of sound itself. What remains of the effects of the performances in which thousands are employed, in which so much talent is brought together, so much time spent in producing? What is there to show for all the energy, industry, and trouble they have cost? Is the result in any degree commensurate with the means employed?

It is the study of a life to acquire a practical proficiency in the playing of any instrument to enable the musician to take part in the important performances given at the present day. The amount of musical skill collected on these occa-

sions is marvellous to contemplate. More time, practice, patience and perseverance will have been necessary to qualify the individual players and singers for one performance of the "Messiah" than by the painters for the production of all the pictures in the Royal Academy. What different results attend the exertions of the painter and the musician! To what constant excitement is the musician exposed compared with the painter at his tranquil course of work in his studio! The productions of the latter remain unimpaired by the lapse of time, and are the admiration of the world for generation after generation; whilst those of the former are forgotten, or only occasionally resuscitated by the industrious antiquary to excite the curiosity of the few. Music, it is well known, was cultivated and flourished in ancient Greece and Rome. Nations so distinguished for their encouragement of the sister Arts would not have neglected the one especially conducive to pleasure and refinement. It is not an erroneous deduction, from all we read of music and musicians in the ancient writers from Herodotus downwards, to say that the ancients were

perhaps more proficient in the humanising art than ourselves. We are told by Athenæus that the seventh Ptolemy filled his dominions with scientific men, including musicians, and that so general did the art become at the period, that there was scarcely a labourer near Alexandria who could not play the lyre and the flute. The high value put upon musical instruments by the ancients is evident from the fact stated by Plutarch in his life of Isocrates, that Ismenias gave three talents, or £500, for a flute at Corinth. But what traces are left of the works of their musicians? What their music was is a matter of dispute at the present day. As Burney says, "Unquestionably it was something with which mankind was highly delighted;" but we know no more. What remains of the doings of the enterprising Impresarios who "got up" the musical contests at the Olympic, Pythian, Nemæan, and Isthmian games? Did not an energetic manager pay Nero for his musical services when he appeared at Naples, entering the city dressed as Apollo, attended by a thousand chariots and five thousand musicians, and sang at the

theatre, which during his performance was shaken to the foundation by an earthquake? The audience fled, we are told; but the undaunted vocalist, scrupulous as to the fulfilment of the contract, finished his song, although there was no one left to listen to it. Nero is said to have been a model tenor. He took more care of his voice than any modern singer. Avoiding stimulants during the day, at night he lay flat on his back, with a thin plate of lead on his stomach, convinced that, by abstinence and this application, the quality of his organ would be improved. Suetonius, moreover, relates that Nero appeared in the character of the heroine *Canace*, who was represented on the stage by the imperial actor under peculiar circumstances indeed. Innumerable instances can be cited to prove the popularity of music among the ancients, although its character is very difficult to determine. By a singular fatality, the books referring immediately to the practice of the art in former ages, such as, for instance, those mentioned by Meursius, in his Notes on Aristoxenus, the works of Dionysius Halicarnassus, which, according to

Suidas, were twenty-six in number, containing the lives and history of musicians (and probably of many an enterprising Impresario of the period, and therefore all the more to be regretted), also the five books by the same author in defence of the Art, refuting what is alleged against it in Plato's Republic, are irrevocably lost, leaving all knowledge of the progress and practice of music in those times to inference and surmise. And a thousand years hence the music of the present day will in all probability have shared the same fate. This seems to be its inevitable destiny. The music even of the last century is fast fading into oblivion. The names of Lulli, Porpora, Lawes, Ives, even that of Muffat, from whom Handel did not hesitate to borrow entire movements, and many other popular men of their day, are entirely unknown to the present generation. Of all the eminent composers who promoted the progress of the art during the early part of the eighteenth century, one only can be said to have achieved a lasting reputation, and that, not by the works for which he was most celebrated during his lifetime. He also was an

enterprising Impresario who experienced all the storm and sunshine of a manager's career, for the particulars of which no one cares much now, although they were exciting enough, and are historically interesting. Handel's Italian Operas and other dramatic compositions are now forgotten; while his oratorios, which were almost unheeded during the composer's lifetime, are those works on which his posthumous fame depends: a proof of the influence of time upon dramatic compositions, and of the comparative immunity of sacred music from that influence.

If such be the case with the composers who leave behind them tangible evidence of their existence, how much more so is it with singers, the public favourites of our ancestors, to hear whom such vast sums were expended,—in whose behalf such fierce feuds raged? Who, except the learned in antiquarian lore, can tell us with any historical accuracy of the once renowned Madame Maupin, as remarkable for her fighting propensities as for her extraordinary vocal powers? Who ever hears her name mentioned? and yet Laborde says that she was the most celebrated

singer at the Court of Louis XIV., and certainly if the statements of the historian can be relied on, she did more to achieve immortal fame than any other vocalist ever attempted. Not content with lyrical honours, if possible she exceeded those by the unvaried success of her hostile encounters with the best duellists of the day, three of whom she is said to have slain on one occasion with the same weapon. At a more recent period two vocalists, Madame Faustina and Madame Cuzzoni, by their rivalry and the ardour of their partisans, occasioned public dissensions which assumed all the importance of a political disturbance. Of these two ladies we read that they endangered the public peace by the most serious theatrical fracas, and that at a banquet, to which they were invited by the celebrated Sir Robert Walpole, in hopes of effecting a reconciliation, they came to blows and were with difficulty separated before inflicting on each other serious injury. And Farinelli! the most gifted singer and accomplished artist that ever won the applause of our forefathers, the correspondent of Metastasio, the associate and adviser

of the Spanish monarch, Philip V. Does the present generation care to know whether Farinelli was popular in England in 1720, and that he was one of the most remarkable men of that period? No, Farinelli was a singer, "il suo nome col suono della voce sparì," a quotation which will apply to all vocalists of the past, present or future, however humiliating the reflection may be to those who measure their future place in history by their present popularity. And the same with actors. The crowd of players that gave such annoyance to the "ponderous Puritan Prynne," who tried so hard and so viciously to suppress them, denouncing all playing as damnable, have disappeared from the minds as completely as they have from the view of recent generations. Dramatic poets are longer lived, although among them, as among musicians, only *one* of ours can be said to have achieved a reputation that will be for all men, and for all time.

Whether it be their dependence upon others for the interpretation of their works, or the imperative necessity for constant novelty in musical expres-

sion, the popularity of composers, according to the evidence of the past, seems restricted to the period in which they live. In opposition to this it may be urged, that the composers of the modern school (the modern school as distinguished from the florid style) have produced works which are beyond comparison superior to any of the secular compositions of the older writers, and it is indeed difficult to imagine any revolution in taste which would cause the grand productions of Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Beethoven to fall into neglect. But it should be remembered, that Glück and Piccini, the very founders of the modern German and Italian schools—those men in whose footsteps all their successors have followed, the models from which Mozart and Beethoven studied—have already afforded a striking instance of the apparently immutable fate of all composers and their works. No lyrical compositions ever excited so much public interest as those of Glück and Piccini in every European capital during the latter part of the last century. In Paris they were upheld in antagonism to each other by their supporters with such earnestness that in 1774 the diversity of opinion between

the Glückists and the Piccinists separated families, and occasioned serious disputes at court. In the theatre where their operas were performed, there were the "Coin du Roi" and "Coin de la Reine," occupied respectively by the partisans of the two factions. Now, however, their music has been as completely superseded by that of more modern writers as that of the old school was by their own. Every period in fact seems to require its particular style of music just as much as its particular style of costume. Both are influenced by the spirit of the age, strict attention to which "spirit" it is indispensable for every enterprising Impresario to pay, if he would not suffer for one of the two errors the public never pardons—being either behind, or before his time. If music, singers, and actors pass so speedily away into oblivion, managers, however enterprising, do so with still greater rapidity. Their ways indeed are unknown to their own generation; for like the scene-shifters they employ, they seldom, unless by accident or the force of circumstances, appear before the public.

CHAPTER III.

DESPOTISM is the only form of theatrical management likely to succeed. Republicanism is fatal to the welfare of dramatic government. In this country at least, a manager can rule with the conventional rod of iron if he but gets a dramatic licence, costing a few shillings per month, and pays his way. In his own theatre, he is king of the castle to all intents and purposes. He can admit or refuse to admit whomsoever he pleases. The terms of his lease are arranged as for a private dwelling-house between himself and his landlord, who, as long as he receives the rent, never interferes in the management. The English Government takes no interest in theatrical enterprise, either in its profits or its losses, as is the case on the Continent. There, the manager, in consideration of a sum of money from the State in which his theatre may be situated, has to submit to the control of a superior authority.

The Grand Opera in Paris, for instance, is carried on by an Impresario who is made to deposit in cash the sum of £20,000 as caution money, against which he receives from the French Government £32,000 annually, to which the Emperor adds £4,000, making £36,000 in all. The example of the Emperor is followed by most of the nobility, who subscribe to the theatres—a practice it would be very desirable to see imitated in this country, where theatres, except the opera houses, are never supported by subscriptions from the upper classes. The French manager has the use of the theatre gratis, but is made to sign a "cahier des charges" containing the conditions imposed upon him, which considerably reduce the value of the annual subsidy. He is obliged to grant pensions to the artists after a certain term of service; he has to produce an entirely new opera in five acts every year, new ballets as well, and he undertakes to keep the theatre open all the year round. The outlay upon a new work at the Grand Opera is rarely less than £5000, and that sum is often exceeded; all the scenery, dresses, and *matériel* furnished by the manager remain the property of Government.

A Commissaire Impérial is appointed to watch the Impresario, and to see the conditions properly carried out, the artists paid, &c. On satisfactory evidence being given that such is the case, the manager receives his subsidy monthly, and his caution money is returned to him at the expiration of his agreement. The maximum receipt of the Grand Opéra House is about 12,000 francs, or £480; which sum was taken nightly for the first 100 representations of Meyerbeer's "Africaine." All the other imperial theatres in Paris are let upon nearly the same system; the subsidies granted them are smaller, and the managers have in most cases to pay rent. At the Opéra Comique the manager is allowed £10,000: he has to produce fourteen original acts in the course of twelve months; no translations may be given; and the theatre is to be kept open throughout the year. The subsidy of the Théâtre Italien and the Théâtre Lyrique is £4000 each. For these three theatres the rent paid is about £4000 a year each, which is also the average rental of the principal theatres in Paris not subsidised by Government, namely, the Porte St. Martin, the Gymnase, and the Palais

Royal. The Théâtre Français, the Odéon, and the Opera are given gratis to their respective managers, but under the onerous conditions just mentioned. Moreover, all receipts are subject to the tax of eleven per cent., known as the *droits des pauvres*, as well as to that of ten per cent. for author's rights. From the Grand Opéra the author and the composer receive the fixed sum of £20 a night between them, independently of the amount of the receipts. The French provincial theatres in all the larger towns are allowed subsidies from their respective municipalities, and the managers have to subscribe to similar conditions as to the *droits des pauvres*, &c., to those stipulated for in Paris. In Brussels the Théâtre de la Monnaie is let on the same plan. In Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg the principal theatres are managed at the expense of Government; and any deficit in the yearly accounts (which always occurs) is made up out of the *Caisse particulière* of the king or emperor.

The managers are paid for their services—and a hard time they have of it, what with serving their royal masters, and conciliating the many interests with which they are brought into conflict.

In Vienna, moreover, the public themselves have to submit to regulations which would somewhat astonish the frequenters of an English theatre. In the lobbies of the two imperial theatres, the Burg and the Kärnthnerthor, these rules, bearing date Feb. 1800, are posted in conspicuous positions. The first articles refer to the approaches and entrances to the theatres, mode of securing places, and other local arrangements. Articles XIV. to XX., respecting the conduct of the audience during the performances, are more remarkable and worth citing. They are set forth in the following barbarous French :—

XIV.—"Dans le nombre des Bienséances à observer une des premières c'est d'ôter son chapeau à l'entrée du parterre noble que leurs Majestés se trouvent au Spectacle ou non, et celui, qui averti par le Commissaire Inspecteur s'obstineroit à rester couvert, sera non-seulement obligé de quitter la salle incontinent, mais il pourra encore, suivant les cas, être sujet à un animadversion.

XV.—"Si leurs Majestés sont presentes au spectacle les hommes se tiendront pareillement au second parterre et dans les Loges la tête découverte.

XVI.—"Il s'entend de soi-même, qu'ainsi que le sentiment des convenances doit le dicter, personne ne fera difficulté d'ôter son chapeau lorsque celui-ci masquerait la vue ou géneroit d'autres spectateurs.

XVII.—"Les applaudissements que meriteroient la Pièce ou les acteurs ne doivent jamais se manifester d'une manière bruïante contraire aux règles de la bienséance, et les réprises

aïant le double inconveniant de trop prolonger la representation, et de fatiguer les chanteurs, il est défendu de faire répéter un morçeau de chant ou de danse.

XVIII.—"Il n'est de même point permis de redemander un morçeau de danse dans les Ballets.

XIX.—"Les applaudissements à trois réprises étant regardés comme un hommage dû aux Souverains seuls, il n'est point permis de les accorder aux acteurs et actrices de quelque genre de spectacle que ce soit. Il est defendu en outre de demander a force de battemens de mains, de cris et autre tapage, que quelque individu que ce soit reparoisse apres la fin du spectacle; ainsi qu'il est sevérement défendu à toutes les personnes attachées au service des Theatres de la Cour de se rendre à ces sortes de provocations, de reparoitre apres la fin du spectacle sous quelque pretexte que ce soit, et surtout d'addresser la parole au Public. Ce réglement ne souffre aucune autre exception que le cas du Debut d'un personnage.

XX.—"Le paiement de l'Entrée ne pourra donner à personne le Droit de commettre une action messéante, ceux qui à la salle du spectacle tenteroient de siffler, huer, faire tapago avec les pieds ou les cannes, seront d'abord arrêtés et ensuite punis pour avoir commis une incongruité, d'autant plus répréhensible, qu'un silence general est un signe bien plus décisif du mécontement d'un public que ce tapage, qui presque toujours n'est que le resultat du caprice ou de la cabale."

It sometimes happens that an unhappy baritone will excite a frequenter of the gallery "to commit an incongruity," in the way of hissing, or that a revolutionary prima donna defies the Imperial command, and appears before the curtain oftener than is allowed, having raised the enthusiasm of the audience to an unwonted pitch by her extraordinary skill; but as a rule both the public and the

artists have a wholesome dread of the tyrannical Impresario, and his regulations are obeyed accordingly.

It is hard to believe that they should be deemed necessary in a theatre frequented by a civilised community. I wonder how they would answer in the Dublin Theatre Royal or in Drury Lane on Boxing Night! On these occasions, the following extract from a decree of the Paris magistrates in 1598 might still with advantage be enforced:—"Every person is prohibited from doing any violence in the Theatre de Bourgogne during the time any piece is performing, as likewise from throwing stones, dust, or anything (including *orange peel ?*) which may put the audience into an uproar or create a tumult."

The restraint put upon an Impresario in Italy renders his position still more irksome than it is in France. The Scala and Canobbiana Theatres in Milan are subsidised (about £9,000 being awarded by the State), and given free to any Impresario who will undertake their management upon the terms required by Government. These terms are most humiliating; and it is surprising

that any one with any money and self-respect will risk the one and renounce the other in such a hazardous undertaking. The manager has to submit his plans, names of the artists engaged, and the operas he proposes to produce, to a Committee of Management appointed by the State, six months before the commencement of the performances. Should he fail to do so, the Committee have power to make arrangements, for which the Impresario is held responsible. The year is divided into three seasons, during each of which, certain new operas have to be given. It is expressly stipulated that the Chorus shall not be less than 40, the Orchestra 78, and the Corps de Ballet 50 in number. Government inspectors are appointed to superintend almost every department of the establishment. The manager has to pay his stage-door keeper, but no one may pass on to the stage without the consent of the Committee of Management. The manager is responsible for the political sentiments of all under engagement to him. There are two surgeons and two medical men attached to the Scala, and one each to the Canobbiana. These stipulations, and many others equally

arbitrary, are set forth in an important looking document, enough from its very appearance to frighten any ordinary Impresario, and deter him from grappling with it. Nevertheless, there are sometimes several competitors for the contract, which is given to the candidate who undertakes to carry out the conditions at the least expense to Government, or who, in other words, is satisfied with a less sum than the £9000 offered as a subsidy. As in the French system, the manager has to deposit a sum of money, £3500, as a substantial guarantee that the artists will be paid, and all the conditions fulfilled. There are minor theatres both in France and Italy which are not supported by Government, and which are carried on by private hands. But in France, the State reserves to itself the right of inspecting the accounts of all places of amusement, for the purpose of taxation. Thus it is also in America. There, the manager must give a return of his gross receipts to all performances, on which a tax of two per cent. is levied, as well as furnish a statement of his profits, on which he pays five per cent. if under £1000, and ten per cent. if above that

amount. Moreover, in America, £100 per annum is charged for the dramatic licence to each theatre. According to Mr. Anson's Dramatic Almanac for this year, 1867, there are 1584 theatres in Europe, of which France has 337, Italy (including Venetia) 346, Spain 168, Great Britain 150, Austria 150, Germany 191, Russia and Poland 44, Belgium 34, Holland 23, Switzerland 20, Sweden and Norway 18, Denmark 15, Portugal 16, Turkey 4, Greece 4, Roumania 3, and Servia 1. In the Australian Colonies the same authority says there are 32 theatres.

The annual rents of theatres in England are very similar in amount to those in America and on the Continent; the rentals of Drury Lane, the Haymarket, Princess's, and the Lyceum ranging between £4000 and £6500 per annum. A theatre in London is generally a good paying property. The greatest risk the landlord incurs is in not finding a tenant. It however very seldom happens that a theatre of any importance is closed for a lengthened period. Much has been said, and many complaints have been made, of the apathy of the English Government in

matters connected with music and the stage; but considering the circumstances of theatrical managers abroad and the freedom of action enjoyed by those at home, it would appear to be more prudent for the latter to be silent on the subject of a grant from Government, which is something wanted by many, who, like the frogs in the fable, know nothing of the conditions upon which it would be conceded. A national theatre subsidised by Parliament with a national dramatic fund attached to it, to which it should be compulsory on every member of the profession to subscribe an amount according to his income, would perhaps be of service to the art and its followers. But I doubt whether it would be of much more permanent benefit than are the individual exertions of the English managers, who, under the present system, are urged by the strongest of all inducements, self-interest, to attract, please, and endeavour to improve the taste of the public they serve. The actual condition of English opera, however, seems to cry aloud for some assistance from the State. It is true that English managers, for their own sake, promote the progress of the Drama, and have done so hitherto

successfully; for in spite of all that may be said to the contrary, stage plays are better produced, "the legitimate Drama" much more perfectly performed at the present day than they ever were in the fabulous good old times. It is also true that managers are, as far as the Drama is concerned, more free and independent without the interference of Government: yet it is to be regretted that some substantial form of support on the part of the nation is not given to English opera. That music should be so generally cultivated among us—that so many popular native composers should exist—that two Italian operas on a scale of such magnitude as those of Covent Garden and Her Majesty's should be carried on apparently with profit, and yet every effort fail to sustain English opera, is a state of things of which in honest truth we have reason to be ashamed. Italian opera is the fashion. The theatres in which it is given are the rendezvous of the fashionable world, and therefore frequented by all those whose ambition it is to belong to the *beau monde*. The Earl Crabbs takes a box for the season—as a matter of course Lady Bare-

acres must have one likewise, and so it is through all ranks of society. It is the fashion to go to the Italian opera; and rather than not do so, Mrs. Brown, who numbers among her visiting acquaintances so many distinguished people of fortune and position, would put up with any inconvenience. Italian opera therefore flourishes. The time will come, it is to be hoped, when English opera will be in vogue—when some influential interest will be exerted in its favour, and turn the tide of fashion full upon it. Until that propitious day arrives, it requires nourishment in the shape of a subsidy, if it is not to die of inanition. Its worst enemies cannot say it does not deserve support. Our composers have made the same progress in their art as those of other countries. Our singers are not by any means inferior, while our instrumentalists are in some respects superior to their continental brethren. English opera has not hitherto had a fair chance. The time of year at which it is invariably produced is not favourable to its success as a matter of fashion; the encouragement afforded to Italian opera has been too strong for

English opera upon its intrinsic merit alone to prevail against it. It is a case in which Government protection is necessary, and one, moreover, in which, to save the art-honour of the country, it should be generously given.

CHAPTER IV.

It is seen, by the history of our theatres, that their progress in days of old was slow, and that the improvements which led to the present perfection of scenic representation are of comparatively recent date.

In this country, as well as in every other part of Europe, the earliest dramatic entertainments were of a religious kind, and were called *miracles* or *mysteries*, from their subjects being the miracles of saints, or taken from parts of Holy Writ. They were devised and represented by the monks, whose object was, by practical illustration, to familiarise the people with the different events mentioned in the Bible. It was with this intention, doubtless, that the monks turned Impresarios, and endeavoured to counteract the debasing influence of the profane mummeries performed by jugglers, minstrels, and buffoons at the great

trade fairs of the middle ages. The first miracle play of which there is any reliable account was given in the year 1110, and is known as having been written by Geoffrey, afterwards abbot of St. Albans. It is called "Saint Catherine," and was acted in the Abbey of Dunstable. It was perhaps the first spectacle of the kind witnessed in England.

"As learning increased," to quote Warton, "and was more widely disseminated, the example of the monks was followed by schools and universities which were founded on the monastic plan, and in many respects resembled the ecclesiastical bodies." In course of time, the trading companies took to performing miracle plays. Of the early Scriptural representations, the most remarkable collection is that known as the Chester Mysteries, which were exhibited at Chester in the year 1327, at the expense of the different guilds of that city. The performances were probably repeated at intervals, and are heard of for the last time in 1600. They were as follows:—"The Fall of Lucifer," by the tanners; "The Creation," by the drapers; "The Deluge," by

the dyers; "Abraham, Melchisedek, and Lot," by the barbers; "Moses, Balak, and Balaam," by the cappers; "The Salutation and Nativity," by the wrights; "The Shepherds Feeding their Flocks at Night," by the painters and glaziers; "The Three Kings," by the vintners; "The Oblation of the Three Kings," by the mercers; "The Killing of the Innocents," by the goldsmiths; "The Purification," by the blacksmiths; "The Temptation," by the butchers; "The Last Supper," by the bakers; "The Blind Men and Lazarus," by the glovers; "Jesus and the Lepers," by the corvesarys; "Christ's Passion," by the bowyers, fletchers, and ironmongers; "Descent into Hell," by the cooks and innkeepers; "The Resurrection," by the skinners; "The Ascension," by the tailors; "The Election of St. Mathias," "Sending of the Holy Ghost," &c., by the fishmongers; "Antichrist," by the clothiers; "Day of Judgment," by the websters.

This is certainly a strange programme, and the details of the performances must appear no less extraordinary to modern readers. It was with no irreverence or impiety that the Deity

was impersonated upon the stage. I shall not, I hope, be thought wanting in respect for the subject of which it treats, if I here cite a scene from the third of the Chester Mysteries, "The Deluge," as a curious specimen of what they were.

The first scenical direction is—"*Et primo in aliquo supremo loco, sive in nubibus, si fieri poterat, loquatur Deus ad Noè, extra arcam existente cum totâ familiâ suâ.*" Then the Almighty, after expatiating on the sins of mankind, is made to say—

"Man that I made I will destroye,
Beast, worme, and fowle to fley,
For one earthe the doe me nye
The folke that are therone.
It harmes mee sore hartefully
The malice that doth nowe multiplye,
That sore it greeves me inwardlie
That ever I made man.

"Therefore Noë, my servant free,
That righteous man arte, as I see,
A shipp soone thou shalt make thee
Of trees drye and lighte.
Litill chambers therein thou make,
And byndinge pytche also thou take,
Within and without ney thou slake
To anoynte yt through all thy mighte," &c.

After some dialogue between Noah, Shem,

Ham, Japheth, and their wives, we find the following stage direction:—"Then Noe with all his family shall make a signe as though the wrought uppon the shippe with divers instruments, and after that God shall speake to Noe—

'Noe, take thou thy meanye,
And in the shipp hie that ye be,
For non so righteous man to me
Is now on earth livinge.
Of clean beastes with thee thou take
Seven and seven, or thou slake,
He and she, make to make
By live in that thou bring,' &c.

"Then Noe shall go into the arke with all his familye, his wife excepte. The arke must be boarded round about, and uppon the bordes all the beastes and fowles hereafter rehearsed must be painted, that there wordes maye agree with the pictures—

'*Sem.*—Sier, here are lions, libardes in
Horses, mares, oxen and swyne,
Neates, calves, sheepe and kyne,
Here sitten thou may see,'" &c.

After all the beasts and fowls have been described, Noah thus addresses his wife—

"*Noe.*—Wife, come in; why standes thou there?
Thou art ever froward, that dare I swere,
Come in on Godes halfe; tyme it were,
For fear lest that wee drowne.
Wife.—Yea, sir, set up your saile,
And rowe forth with evil haile,
For withouten anie saile
I will not oute of this towne;
But I have my gossepes everich one;
One foote further I will not gone:
They shal not drown, by St. John,
And I may save ther life."

She then tells Noah he may get a new wife, but is at length put on board by force. On Noah's welcoming her—"Welcome, wife, into this boate!"—she gives him a sound box on the ear, adding, "Take thou that for thy note!"

The mysteries, according to the authority just referred to, frequently required the introduction of allegorical characters, such as Charity, Sin, Death, Hope, Faith, and the like; and as the common poetry of the times, especially among the French, began to deal much in allegory, at length plays were formed entirely consisting of such personifications. These were called *moralities*. Miracle-plays or mysteries were totally destitute of invention and plan; they tamely represented stories according to the letter of the

Scriptures, or the respective legend. But the moralities indicate dawnings of the dramatic art. They contain some rudiments of a plot, and even attempt to delineate character and to paint manners. From them the gradual transition to real historical personages was natural and obvious. Malone says that the first piece that looks like a regular comedy, and which is neither mystery nor morality, is "Gammer Gurton's Needle," written by John Still (subsequently bishop of Bath and Wells), and acted at Christ's College, Cambridge, 1566. Historical plays were undoubtedly extant before that time, and pieces called interludes had been introduced. These latter generally represented some ludicrous incident of a familiar kind in a style of the broadest farce. An interlude by Heywood, called the "Four P's," describes a contest between a pedlar, a poticary, a palmer, and a pardoner, as to which of them shall tell the grossest lie. The palmer remarks that he never saw a woman out of patience in all his life, and his rivals, amid much jesting, confess themselves beaten.

From the last date mentioned (1566) dramatic

compositions increased in number until that great period distinguished from all others in English literature by the works of Shakespeare. This was 1589, when there seem to have been seven principal theatres in London: three private houses, namely, that in Blackfriars, that in Whitefriars, and the Cockpit, or Phœnix, in Drury Lane; and four that were called public theatres, namely, the "Globe" on the Bankside, the "Curtain" in Shoreditch, the "Red Bull" at the upper end of St. John Street, and the "Fortune" in Whitecross Street. Besides these, temporary theatres were erected in the yards of inns, "which had secret chambers and places, as well as open stages and galleries."

Originally plays were performed in churches, and on Sundays. Though Bonner, Bishop of London, issued a proclamation to the clergy of his diocese in 1542, prohibiting "all manner of common plays, games, or interludes to be played, set forth or declared within their chapels," &c., the practice seems to have been continued occasionally during the reign of Queen Elizabeth; for the author of "The Third Blast of Retrait from Plays

and Players" complains, in 1580, that the players are permitted to publish their mammeterie in every temple of God, and that throughout England, &c.; and this abuse is taken notice of in one of the canons of King James the First, given soon after his accession in 1603. Early, however, in Elizabeth's reign, the established players of London began to act in temporary theatres constructed in the yards of inns; and about the year 1570, I imagine, one or two permanent playhouses were erected. But the theatre in Blackfriars and that in Whitefriars were certainly built before 1580, for we learn from a puritanical pamphlet that soon after that year "many goodly citizens and well-disposed gentlemen of London, considering that playhouses and dicing houses were traps for young gentlemen and others, and perceiving that many inconveniences and great damage would ensue upon the long suffering of the same, acquainted some pious magistrates therewith, who thereupon made humble suite to Queene Elizabeth and her privy-councell, and obtained leave from her Majesty to thrust the players out of the Citty, and to pull down all

playhouses and dicing houses within their liberties; which accordingly was effected, and the playhouses in Gracious Street, Bishopsgate Street, that nigh Paul's, that on Ludgate Hill, and the Whitefriars, were quite pulled down and suppressed by the care of these religious senators." The theatre in Blackfriars, not being within the liberties of the City of London, escaped the fury of these fanatics. Elizabeth, however, though she yielded in this instance to the frenzy of the time, was, during the whole course of her reign, a favourer of the stage, and a frequent attendant upon plays. So early as in the year 1569, as we learn from another puritanical writer, the children of her chapel (who are described as "her Majesty's unfledged minions"), "flaunted it in their silkes and sattens, and acted plays on profane subjects in the chapel royal." In 1574, she granted a licence to James Burbage, probably the father of the celebrated tragedian, and four others, servants to the Earl of Leicester, to exhibit all kinds of stage-plays during pleasure in any part of England, "as well for the recreation of her loving subjects, as for her own solace and pleasure when

she should think good to see them;" and in the year 1583, after a furious attack had been made on the stage by the puritans, twelve of the principal comedians of that time, at the earnest request of Sir Francis Walsingham, were selected from the companies then subsisting under the licence and protection of various noblemen, and were sworn her Majesty's servants. (See Malone's Historical Account of the English Stage.)

It is a matter of dispute between Malone and Steevens what scenery was used in Shakespeare's time. Malone contends, and apparently with reason, that "no painting in perspective, on a cloth fastened to a frame or roller," was brought into use upon the stage earlier than 1656, when Sir William Davenant invented a new species of entertainment, taken from the Italian operas, which was exhibited at Rutland House in Aldersgate Street. Great improvements in the art of scenery had, however, been made by Inigo Jones some twenty years previous; but whether he went so far as to introduce side-scenes or perspective in the stage pictures, as did Davenant, it is difficult to say. There is little doubt that curtains, arras

or tapestry, trap-doors, up and down which the cauldron and other stage properties were moved, were used at the Globe and other theatres by Shakespeare's contemporaries; but scenery, such as that to which we are accustomed, was then certainly unknown. It seems more likely that curtains divided the stage, and were drawn aside or closed as the circumstances of the play required what we call a change of scene. Black curtains were sometimes used when tragedies were performed.

During the seventeenth century, theatrical performances took place chiefly by day-light, from three to five in the afternoon. These were the usual hours of performance at the Globe—the summer theatre of our ancestors—the pit or "yard" of which was exposed to the weather. At some of the theatres the spectators were admitted on the stage, and the critics and wits of the time usually sat there, attended by their pages, who provided them with pipes and tobacco; for smoking was a practice in which, according to Prynne, the women, as well as men, indulged. The stage was strewed with rushes; sometimes,

but very rarely, it was entirely matted over. At the back of the stage there was a balcony, on which, according to the incidents of the plot, the performers appeared.

A play-bill of old did not contain more than a single play on one day, but during the performances it was customary to introduce a clown, "by his mimick gestures to breed in the less capable mirth and laughter." The privileges of the clown were very extensive; for between the acts, and sometimes between the scenes, he claimed a right to enter on the stage and to excite merriment by any species of buffoonery that struck him. His peculiar province was to entertain the audience after the play was over, at which time themes were given to him by some of the spectators to descant upon, but more commonly he amused the public by a jig—a comic metrical composition often in rhyme, which was sung by the clown, who likewise occasionally danced, and was accompanied by a tabor and pipe. The clown still holds his place in the circus of our time, and his origin may be traced to the satirical interludes of Greece and the Mimes of Rome.

It was not until 1765 that Garrick, on his return from France, introduced the present method of illuminating the stage by lights not visible to the audience. Before then the stage was lighted by two large branches, or at a more recent period by small circular wooden frames furnished with candles, eight of which hung on the stage, four at each side. Cressets or large open lanterns illuminated the body of the house. We have become so accustomed to the brilliancy of gas, that it is hard to imagine the effect of any theatrical display without its aid. The Lyceum was the first London theatre lighted by gas in 1803—4.

I have not been able to ascertain when, during the progress of the drama in early times, women ceased to appear as actresses. They certainly assisted in the *mysteries*. This is proved by the third chapter of Genesis being frequently chosen as a subject for representation. It was performed with strict regard to detail, and could not have been given without a proper representative of the principal female character.

In Shakespeare's time it is equally certain that men and boys played all female parts. And it

was not until 1660 that women, in imitation of foreign theatres, appeared upon the English stage. Even in France they were not known as *dramatis personæ* until 1621, when, according to Saint Foix, "*Dans le Ballet de Triomphe de l'amour on vit pour la première fois des danseuses sur le théâtre de l'opéra, auparavant c'etoient, deux, quatre, six, ou huit danseurs qu'on habilloit en femme.*"

The revolution in this respect has indeed been complete, for now women generally take male characters in the ballet.

The female French ballet-dancers or actresses soon came to England; we find a French company, in which they were included, made its appearance in London in 1629. In the Office fee-book of the master of the revels, Sir Henry Herbert, is the following entry:—"For allowinge of a Frenche companie att the Fortune to play one afternoone, this 14 day of Decemb., 1629, £1. I should have had another peece," adds the conscientious master, "but in respect of their ill luck I was content to bestow a peece back."

Notwithstanding their "ill-luck," the French

continued to perform in London, until at last a theatre was built for them in Drury Lane. It was this company that excited Prynne's indignation (see his Histrio-Mastix), and by the abuse of which, and of the appearance of women upon the stage especially, he so highly offended royalty, that he was tried in the Star Chamber, and sentenced to be imprisoned for life, fined £5000, expelled Lincoln's Inn, disbarred and disqualified to practise the law, degraded of his degree in the university, to be set on the pillory, his ears cut off, and his book burned by the common hangman; which rigorous sentence was (according to Whitelocke, quoted by Burney) as rigorously executed,—rather a heavy penalty for criticism, although the latter was of the very harshest nature.

After the Restoration, we are told by Cibber, that it was a frequent practice of the ladies of quality to carry Mr. Kynaston, the actor, in his female dress, after the play, in their coaches to Hyde Park—the play having been given at the Globe Theatre in the afternoon.

It is often made a reproach to the female sex of

the days of old that they frequented theatres when the language of the stage was unfit for ears polite.

The dialogue of ancient comedies is unquestionably free, and probably obliged the ladies of those days to wear masks to hide the blushes that any extravagant expression might cause to rise. Hence the custom of our fair ancestors concealing their faces when they went to the play.

It appears to me that far greater outrage is done to modesty by the ballets of the present day, when masks are out of fashion, than by any words that were uttered upon the stage in former times. Theatrical costume seems to require a censorship as much as, if not more than, theatrical literature. It is yearly becoming more licentious. Some restraint ought certainly to be put upon those stage managers who arrange our pantomimes and other spectacles, intended especially for the amusement of the young, and of the general public. Unfortunately it is the custom to make ballet a chief feature in these representations, and the more immodestly the female dancers dress and perform, the greater is the

attractive power of the entertainment. This should not be. It is allowing the stage to exercise a demoralising instead of an elevating influence. A licenser of plays, when asked a short time since by a committee of the House of Commons why permission was given for the performance of the opera "La Traviata" in Italian, and refused to an English version of the same story in the form of a play, assigned as a reason for the anomaly that the Italian opera would be seen by few, but that had the play been performed in English it would have been hurtful and dangerous to many. The same specious argument will apply to stage costume. If it is indispensable to the higher classes and those who frequent fashionable theatres (the prices of admission to which are prohibitory to the general public) that women should appear upon the stage in costume degrading from its utter indelicacy, let the practice in those places continue; but in theatres where dramatic representations are acknowledged to have an important influence for better or worse upon the morals of the public, the growing tendency to unbridled licentiousness

in theatrical costume should at once be curbed by the strong rein of judicial authority.

Great changes have taken place of late years in our theatres. "The most striking and significant," says a well-known writer on the subject, "is that by which congregations have been induced to assemble therein on Sunday evenings and to listen to the Word of God preached to them by zealous ministers from the stage." In this respect, our theatres have been made to serve the purpose to which those of ancient Greece were applied. In them the successors of the apostles preached the Gospel, a fact which after all the perils and vicissitudes the Drama has experienced, may be said to connect the playhouse of the present day with the theatres of those times when Sophocles and Æschylus shed their glory on the stage.

CHAPTER V.

Among other negative blessings which the English managers and public enjoy, the absence of an organised and recognised system of claque is one for which they may be thankful.

In Paris, the *claque* exists in all theatres, with the honourable exception of the Théâtre Italien. At the Grand Opera, the present Chef de la Claque, M. David, is a man of importance and intelligence—of importance to all interested in the success of the performances which it is his *métier* to applaud—of intelligence, for he makes a handsome income for himself by flattering the *amour propre* of others. He has a staff, two hundred strong, under his command. With cunning generalship he distributes his forces in batches of ten or twenty throughout the house. Each of these he places under the surveillance of trusty lieutenants—men of caution and of

superior address. He occupies a conspicuous position himself, and conducts the applause with as much care and precision as the *chef d'orchestre* directs the music. It won't do to encore a *morçeau* of which the disinterested part of the audience disapproves; but when there is a chance, and the applause has been properly paid for in sterling coin of the realm, then the enthusiasm of the claque has no limit, and the *succès* is a *succès fou.* In most of the theatres, the claqueurs sit together, and generally occupy the centre of the pit. With a little practical experience you can pretty well tell which of the artists on the stage is liberal towards the claque, and which the reverse. Old stagers—favourites of the public—are of course more or less independent of what seems to be such an ignominious system, although all subscribe, and you are sometimes astonished at one of the actors playing an inferior part getting a more enthusiastic reception than the hero of the piece. The mystery, however, is easily explained if it is remembered that the reception has cost more than the premier rôle was willing to give. On a first night, the claque is an

object of interest to authors, actors, singers, and managers. The chef has long and serious interviews with the Impresario, at which are discussed the different "points" that are to be distinguished, where the claque is to laugh loudly or express approbation by an encouraging bravo. Auguste, David's predecessor at the Opera, insisted upon all first nights confided to his care being sustained *à la crescendo*. He used to declare it would never do to exhaust the influence of his efforts upon the first and second acts, but that as the piece progressed so should the excitement of the claque increase, until the last act ended in the mad enthusiasm of his myrmidons. Auguste was a man of mark. A giant in stature, it was his custom to dress in the most brilliant colours, bright green being his favourite *nuance*.

Free admission is given to the members of the claque, the tickets being handed to the chef, who disposes of them as he likes. Some he sells at half-price; others he gives to well-known hands. On important occasions, such as the first performance of a new piece, he has to engage his men, besides giving them their tickets, having to select

those in whom he can have confidence, and who will avoid any collision with "*ces gredins de billets payants*," as Auguste used respectfully to designate the paying public. Dr. Veron, by the way a very able, enterprising Impresario, and perhaps the first medico who ever undertook the management of a theatre, in his amusing "Mémoires d'un Bourgeois de Paris" gives an interesting account of his interviews with Auguste, who, he says, realised some thirty or forty thousand francs a year, and lived *en bon père de famille*. That the position of Chef de la Claque is worth having is evident from the fact of David having but recently paid forty thousand francs for his exclusive right to it at the Grand Opera. Dr. Veron defends the system as being necessary to encourage and animate all those who appear before the public: he contends that the presence of the claque prevents many disgraceful scenes to which the cliques of different artists might give rise in the theatre. He tells the claqueurs, "You have a pleasant duty to perform—put an end to quarrels, help the weakest, cease to applaud should the public object, be a pattern of politeness and good behaviour, and

put a stop by all means in your power to every unjust opposition that may be made either to the artists or the piece that is being acted."

Notwithstanding Dr. Veron's defence of it, I cannot but think the claque a most contemptible institution. True it is that in this as well as in every other country, the practice of giving free tickets and of crowding a theatre with friends on a first night or on the occasion of a *début* may be perhaps indulged in to an unreasonable extent. Our plan, however, is surely not so objectionable as that by which the applause one hears in a French theatre—like a discharge of musketry—is paid for, as though it were ammunition at so much a round. In the one case the applause is hearty, though perhaps indiscreet; in the other it is dealt out according to the money given for it, and is attributable to no other but mercenary considerations.

The claque as a system is not to be met with anywhere out of France. It is sometimes employed as a means of deceiving even the Impresario himself. If an engagement is coming to an end without mention being made of its renewal, the

assistance of the claque is necessary to persuade the apathetic manager of the popularity of the actor or singer whose services he is about to lose. Clandestine arrangements are entered into with the chef, and as the "last nights" diminish in number, the effect apparently produced by the fading star increases. The manager's attention is drawn to the fact by some judicious friend who is in the conspiracy, and although the Impresario knows well enough how to account for the applause, he is nevertheless led away by it, and fancies some improvement has really taken place in the performer. The plot generally succeeds, and the manager is taken in—to discover at his leisure that the supposed newly developed talent was for carrying out a conspiracy with success, rather than for pleasing the public. The engagement renewed, the object has been gained, and the vehemence of the applause henceforth decreases, there being no further necessity to pay for it. If the claque can thus occasionally mislead a native manager "to the manner born," it surely is not a matter of surprise that foreigners should be deceived by it. To entrap these unfortunate individuals the

Demoiselles Snevellicci of the Paris Stage will ruin themselves and their friends in order to ensure the good services of the claque. It was not unusual in Veron's time at the opera (1831) for the admirers of a *première danseuse* to send, together with the bouquets, wreaths, and other tokens of their devotion, a handsome fee for Auguste, so that the fair one might be spared that drain upon her purse, and yet be ensured the happiness and comfort of a grand success in advance. With such means at their command, it might be supposed that artists on the French stage could make whatever terms they please with their managers. But such is not the case. The claque finds its own level, and "*ces gredins de billets payants*" are, after all, the true arbiters of the merit of the performers who prove attractive, or not, according to their intrinsic talent, and not because they pay the claque more or less extravagantly.

Whether in France or England, free tickets are the cause of much social trouble. They are seldom if ever properly appreciated. If a manager sends a private box to his friends, he is supposed to do so from some sinister motive—his theatre wants

filling, or he has a favour to ask. If he be written to for tickets, and should refuse to give them, for the honest reason that they would keep so much money out of his pocket, he is considered mean and selfish; some persons apparently being unreasonable enough to believe that a manager opens a theatre with the philanthropic object of affording amusement to his friends, without the remotest desire or hope of remuneration from his undertaking. Any pretext is sufficient for these people in making their demands. They have a relative who writes for the newspapers, they are intimate with one of the principal singers or actors, an old member of their family was once connected with the theatrical profession—a fact mentioned in such a manner as to imply that they are almost ashamed to own it. The applications for free admissions to a popular theatre are, in reality, so numerous that, were they all complied with, there would be no room left for the paying portion of the public. They who ask these favours seem to forget that their doing so is very much the same as though they were to beg Swan & Edgar to give them so many rolls of silk to make dresses

for their wives and daughters, or to request the present of a delicate sirloin from their butcher. Silks and butchers' meat, they may contend, are necessaries, and must be bought; but, surely, it is quite as desirable that tickets and opera boxes should be paid for, in order to enable a manager and his company to live. I am not an enterprising Impresario, be it remembered; nevertheless, I have some feeling for those who cater for the public, and whose liberality as regards free tickets is often much abused.

But the trouble caused by free admissions does not end with the manager—it affects those to whom the tickets are given. An opera box "to admit four" is a very fire-brand in a domestic circle of more than that number. It generally arrives late in the day on which it is intended to be used. Its appearance upsets all the household. Paterfamilias is taken by surprise—his quiet evening at home destroyed. He has to say who shall go and who shall not. Jealousies in the family arise, often difficult to pacify.

At the theatre, a free ticket is not treated with any great respect by the manager's servants, who,

either from loyalty to their master or in their own interest, show more attention to those who pay for their admission. The invited guests are not always the most hospitably received. A proverb tells us not to look a gift-horse in the mouth, and by the same rule, it is not deemed polite to make any inquiry as to the position of a free opera box. It may be on a level with the chandelier, "up above the pit so high, like a pill box in the sky" —quite out of sight of the stage; if you accept it you must not complain.

It often happens that those who are on the free list of a theatre are the most critical, and condemn the performances which others applaud. To be revenged on these malcontents, I suppose, it is that the manager sometimes issues given tickets, admitting up to a certain hour, but not after. This has always seemed to me a very unworthy plan, and attributable to an ill-concealed desire of making money, if possible, while apparently doing a favour. There is very little reason for not allowing such tickets to admit at any hour, unless it be that, by restricting the time, those who arrive too late are willing to pay at the doors rather than go

home again. It is almost as bad as the system which once prevailed of giving away more tickets for one part of the house than it would hold, in the hope of forcing the free ticket holders to go into other places, the price to which was higher. For instance, a thousand tickets would be issued for the pit, which would only accommodate five hundred people; when the thousand came in, the overflow filled the boxes—the unhappy dupes being made to pay the difference (or "cross money," as it is technically called) between the price of admission to the pit and that part of the house—the trap which had been left to catch them.

When "business" was very bad, this method of forcing the cross money used to be successfully adopted for a time (not long, however, before it was found out) by a manager of days gone by. It was, he said, his way of distributing free tickets judiciously.

CHAPTER VI.

Actors and musicians do not make more money in France than they do in other parts of the world. The engagements in Paris are for longer periods than in England, and artists belonging to the Imperial Theatres, both in France and Germany, are entitled to a pension after a certain term of service—a provision never dreamt of in this country. Formerly, London and St. Petersburg paid larger sums than were given elsewhere; but now the rate of artistic remuneration in all countries has reached a point far beyond that which was ever known some years ago. Italy is, perhaps, an exception to the rule; there the performers work harder and are worse off than in Germany or France. And in Italy, moreover, they are exposed to the torments of a petty press, which levies black-mail upon them to an incredible extent. There, theatrical and musical

journals abound in the principal towns, and are to be met with in every village that can boast of a theatre. They are as rank in their profusion as weeds in a neglected garden. Their means of ensuring a circulation is, perhaps, peculiar to themselves. They are distributed far and wide, and to the uninitiated, as it were, gratuitously; a notice, however, generally in type small enough to be overlooked, informs recipients, that:—"Chi non rispinge i primi due numeri che gli verranno spediti si terrà come associato," according to which, whosoever does not return the first two numbers of the paper sent him is sure to be called upon for a subscription. It is to members of the musical and theatrical professions that these "journals" are thus supplied, and by neglecting the notice, either from ignorance of its existence or forgetfulness, the artists become too often the victims of a system of extortion. *Débutants* are more especially the objects of solicitous attention. A new tenor, no matter whether primo or secondo, after his first appearance receives a volley of paper missiles; a prima donna is overwhelmed, and a contralto surprised, and at first,

perhaps, flattered, to find herself addressed from all quarters by these energetic editors. The manner in which art and artists are treated in many of these pseudo art-journals is singularly familiar. Those subscribers who happen to be in arrears with their subscriptions are mentioned by name in the notices to correspondents, and threatened with proceedings if they do not pay up forthwith. An anecdote is related of a young tenor with a fine voice but an empty purse, who, being about to make his first appearance, and desirous of securing the goodwill and protection of one of the journals in question, called upon the editor to assure him of his intention of subscribing to the paper whenever his resources allowed him to do so. He was cordially received at first, but the manner of the literary tyrant changed perceptibly as soon as the true state of the visitor's finances became known. The singer was earnest in his appeal, and promised faithfully that the subscription should be paid out of the first instalment due upon his engagement. After a somewhat protracted interview, assurances of mutual support were interchanged. The *début* took place, and was most

successful. It was noticed by the wily editor in the following cautious terms:—"Signor —— is an artist who promises much. Before recording a decided opinion as to his merits we will wait and see whether he fulfils our expectations." There are certainly some distinguished exceptions to the prevalent character of Italian theatrical journalism—exceptions the more distinguished for the worthlessness by which they are surrounded. The Trovatore of Milan, and the occasional art feuilletons of the political journals, afford an agreeable contrast to the petty prints which, like swarms of locusts, prey upon the musical and theatrical profession at the present day in Italy, and are a disgrace to the country.

A "first appearance" at any theatre, in any part of the world, is a serious matter for a *débutant;* but in Italy it is a trial of the most rigorous character. A first night at the Scala, in Milan, is proverbial for being the most severe ordeal that either singers or composers can encounter. In no other theatre in Europe is an audience so difficult to please—so summary in its measures—ever assembled. The Milanese pride

themselves upon the rigour of their criticism. Their expressions of approval or discontent are frequent and of the most extravagant nature. They applaud and laugh at an artist during the performance of a solo, approving one phrase and condemning the next. Their applause is the most boisterous and enthusiastic it is possible to imagine; they hiss, hoot, laugh and whistle, with still greater zest, if an unfortunate singer happen to displease them. A few years ago I was standing at the side-scenes of the Scala, talking to an unhappy baritone who was trembling most pitiably at having to face his judges. He had gone through part of the opera, and by his demonstrative gestures, which belonged rather to the French than to the Italian style of acting, had excited the derision of the audience. The time had come when by his singing the portrait-song in the *Ballo* he was to fail or triumph. The tenor, a fellow-victim, who, on that same evening was condemned to the purgatory of a *fiasco*, told him not to move his arms about so much, as that was sure to excite ridicule. "*Croyez vous?*" said the baritone. How he shook—how

cold and clammy his hands were, as he said good-bye to me before going on the stage, pallid, even through his paint, from fright. During the recitative a jealous rival in the pit asked him if he knew what he was singing about, and whether he thought he was worth so much a week. In spite of many interruptions of a similar nature he was lucky enough to sing the song so well as to overcome all opposition, and to gain the good opinion of those who listened to him with impartiality.

Notwithstanding this severity of criticism, "the land of song" has of late years forfeited its reputation for excellence in music and the drama. Its best singers and actors are rarely heard or seen in their native land. As soon as they have means to do so, they seek their fortunes in other countries, where they receive better pay, and are better appreciated. The result is that the performances in Italy are inferior, and art generally is in a state of decadence. There are crowds of artists, musical and dramatic, but almost without exception, those at all above mediocrity are to be met with anywhere but in Italy. There

are also many young composers whose works are given at the Scala and the other principal theatres; but their productions are not remarkable for any merit, except their servile imitation of Verdi! Few of these operas outlive the season of their first performance. Classical music is seldom performed, and stringed quartét playing is considered too abstruse for the public taste. That which is discreditable to the taste and good sense of the public frequenting the Scala at Milan, is a barbarous custom strictly enforced, of introducing a ballet, sometimes two hours long, between the acts of the opera. Several attempts have been made to discontinue such an unreasonable order of performance; but the public are inexorable, and unless the ballet be given during the opera, take revenge by forsaking the theatre altogether.

The unsettled state of Italian politics has, no doubt, had a prejudicial influence on these matters; under the new *régime* it is to be hoped the Italians will redeem their character, and their country resume its former enviable position in the world of art.

In the contracts entered into with the artists

engaged at the Continental theatres, a heavy fine is payable on any of the conditions of the engagement being broken. A story is told of Sophie Cruvelli when she was singing at the Grand Opera in Paris, that she sent to the manager to say she should not sing on a certain occasion, and would rather pay the forfeit than do so. During the day for the evening of which she was announced, the director of the theatre called upon her. "*Comment, Mademoiselle, vous ne chantez pas ce soir?*" he exclaimed, after the first greetings were over. "*Non, Monsieur, je veux me reposer, et je payerai le dédit. Après tout, ce n'est que mille francs.*" "*Mille francs, Mademoiselle, vous vous trompez, c'est dix mille francs. Lisez votre engagement.*" The lady was completely taken aback. "*Dix mille francs! Cela par exemple est trop fort—je chanterai.*"

In this instance, the forfeit had a wholesome effect. Fines are also introduced into the English contracts, but are seldom enforced, it being generally a matter of arrangement between the manager and the artist as to how the loss, if any has occurred, is to be made up. The manager,

strange to say, is usually the gainer under such circumstances. If the performer is unable to appear, from sudden illness, or any other cause, additional performances are stipulated for, which, if not of too frequent occurrence, usually atone for the disappointment. It is seldom, except in extreme cases, that money actually changes hands to pay the forfeit agreed upon in a theatrical or operatic engagement.

This *entente cordiale* between the manager and his artists as to the enforcing of fines cannot be said to extend to those who do not enjoy a weekly 10*l.* franchise in the dramatic kingdom. The rules and regulations by which the "working classes" of a theatrical realm are governed form a very strict code of laws, and must be obeyed by all those who come within their jurisdiction. Here is the code drawn up for the government of Drury Lane by one of the most successful monarchs of that empire.

The agreement preceding the rules and regulations is that by which the subject binds him- (or her-) self to the control of the managerial despot.

"THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

"MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT made the day of 18 , between ——, the manager of The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, of the one part, and —— of —— of the other part, as follows (namely):—

"The said Manager engages the said —— and the said —— engages —— to the said Manager, for —— to rehearse and perform to the best of —— skill and ability —— at the said theatre, or any substituted place, in case the said theatre shall be rendered unfit for theatrical representation by fire, repairs, or any other cause, so often as —— shall be warned so to do by the said Manager, or any other person on his behalf, or by notice in the bills of the day or newspapers; or at any other theatre in the provinces, by the said Manager paying in addition to the above-mentioned salary, the charge of the railway fares, 2nd class, to and fro.

"The said —— will abide by and conform to the rules and regulations hereto annexed, and which are to be taken and considered as forming part of this agreement, and are signed by the said —— and will pay such of the several sums therein-mentioned as shall from time to time attach upon or be payable by the said —— or suffer the same to be stopped and deducted from any salary, then or thereafter to become due and payable to the said —— it being hereby expressly understood and agreed that the same shall, for all the purposes of this agreement, be deemed to be a debt due and owing to the said Manager.

"During the continuance of this agreement, —— at the said theatre, —— shall not, without the previous permission (in writing) of the said Manager, practise, rehearse, act, sing, dance, recite, or perform, or assist in so doing, or be concerned in any plays, operas, pieces, or other theatrical exhibitions, or entertainment of the stage, whatever, or in any oratorio, or concert, in any theatre or place within ten miles of the metropolis.

"In the event of the said —— breaking this agreement, by entering into any contract, arrangement, or agreement, written or otherwise with any person other than the said Manager, during the continuance of this agreement, whereby the services of the said —— are to be employed for the benefit, or advantage or otherwise, of such other person, by reason whereof the said —— shall not be enabled to fulfil —— engagement under this agreement, then the said —— shall pay to the said Manager the sum of two hundred pounds as and for liquidated damages.

"The said —— giving —— services hereinbefore stipulated for, and abiding by and fulfilling in manner aforesaid —— part of this agreement (and adhering to the rules and regulations of the theatre hereto annexed), the said manager will pay to the said —— the weekly salary of —— according to the custom of the play-house pay—that is, for such nights only as the said theatre shall be open for theatrical performances under the management of the said Manager."

"*Witness,*

"RULES AND REGULATIONS AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE, REFERRED TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ANNEXED AGREEMENT.

"*General Regulations.*

"1. Every person engaged as a performer, or in any other capacity in the theatre, is required forthwith to enter his or her address in the general address book, kept for that purpose by the porter at the stage-door of the theatre, and to re-enter the same immediately on every removal; and if the residence be more than one mile from the theatre, each person shall bear and pay the expenses of all calls by post or otherwise.

"2. Any person under any engagement or employment at this theatre, performing, dancing, singing, or otherwise exercising his or her talent, either for his or her remuneration, or for that of any other person, or for the advantage of any other theatre, establishment, or place of amusement, during such engagement or employment, without the previous permission of the Manager,

in writing, and although not thereby prevented from fulfilling his or her engagement with the Manager, shall for each and every such breach of this rule, pay the sum of £200 as and for liquidated damages, and shall also forfeit his or her engagement, if the Manager shall by writing declare it forfeited.

"3. Every performer is expected to go on the stage whenever it is deemed expedient to sing the national airs (except when introduced in any dramatic performance), or incur the forfeiture of three nights' salary; such air or airs announced in the bills of the day, or by call in the green-room of the theatre, will be deemed sufficient notice.

"4. Any performer refusing or neglecting to act or appear in a part assigned to him or her, such part being within the terms of his or her engagement, he or she shall forfeit for every such part so refused three weeks' salary, and be liable to the cancellation of his or her engagement at the option of the Manager.

"5. The inability of any person to attend to his or her professional or other duties, whether arising from illness or any other cause, is to be communicated as soon as possible, by a notice in writing, accompanied by a medical certificate, which certificate shall truly state the nature of such illness to the Manager (or his representative), who is not bound to pay salary or any part thereof during the period of such absence; and should such absence exceed one month, the engagement may be cancelled at the option of the Manager. All performers so absenting themselves will be required to give two days' notice in writing to the Manager or his authorised agent, of their ability to return to their duties, that there may be sufficient time to announce them.

"6. The value of all written and printed music, manuscripts, printed books, or written parts, will be charged for if not returned to the person employed to receive the same at the theatre, one week after the production of the piece, opera, or pantomime.

"7. Every person engaged by the night is subject to the same

forfeiture for neglect of duty, according to the rate of salary, as those on the regular establishment of the theatre.

"8. Performers are not allowed to go in front of the house on the evening of their performing, without express permission from the Management.

"9. Any person altering or defacing any cast, call, or notice, of whatsoever sort or description, shall forfeit half a week's salary.

"10. Every person engaged at this theatre, as a performer or otherwise, to be paid weekly, according to the usual mode of playhouse payment.

"11. No performer or other person engaged or employed at this theatre, shall be entitled to be paid for any day or days on which the theatre is not open for theatrical performances.

"12. Any person found intoxicated, or smoking in the theatre, to forfeit a week's salary; and if the offence be repeated, the person so offending to be liable to the cancellation of his or her engagement at the option of the Manager.

"13. All performers (who by their engagements are to provide their own dresses) to appear in dresses of suitable quality, and made after the authorities which will be furnished them.

"14. All performers to provide stage properties, such as shoes, sandals, boots, tights, stockings, &c., in accordance with the period and colour of the dress which is furnished them. All modern dresses to be as near the present fashion as possible; and the Manager is at liberty to object to any such costume, or part thereof, and in which case the performer is to provide another.

"15. The Manager to have the power to cancel the engagement of any one engaged or employed by him, for using obscene, vulgar, or insulting language, or for indulging in unseemly conduct within the walls of the theatre.

"16. No one allowed to bring any person behind the scenes, unless by special permission (in writing) of the Manager or his representative.

"17. The close of each season will be announced a fortnight before by a written notice in the green-room.

"18. Any notice to be given by the Manager to any person engaged or employed by him, may be given personally to such person, or left at the address which such person shall have last given; or if no address have been so given, then the same may be deposited in the letter rack, or other place for the deposit of letters in the theatre.

"*Rules and Regulations.*

"19. All performers shall attend such rehearsals as the Management shall think necessary during the engagements, and also during seven days previous to the commencement thereof, if required, but they shall not be entitled to be paid for any such attendances, or if called upon to rehearse during Passion Week.

"20. Rehearsals to commence at the time mentioned in the call; ten minutes being allowed (for variation of clocks) for the first piece rehearsal, but not for any subsequent one.

"21. Any one absent from rehearsal shall forfeit the following proportions of salary, and if the part should consist of one scene only, it shall be considered as a whole rehearsal:—

Salaries of Performers.	If Late for Rehearsal.	If Absent from the whole Rehearsal.
£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.
To 1 10 0	1 6	0 3 6
3 0 0	2 6	0 4 0
5 0 0	3 6	0 5 0
7 0 0	5 0	0 8 0
9 0 0	7 6	0 10 0
£9 and above.	—	1 1 0

"22. For not being perfect at the last rehearsal (sufficient time having been given for study), one night's salary.

"23. Apologies for non-attendance to be delivered to the stage manager or prompter, before the forfeiture has been incurred.

"*Rules during Performance.*

"24. For not being ready to begin at the time announced in

the bills, or for keeping the stage waiting at any other part of the performance—ten minutes allowed for change of dress—to forfeit half a week's salary.

"25. No person whatever permitted to stand behind the scenes at night, or at a general rehearsal (unless called for the stage), on any pretence whatever, under the forfeiture of one night's salary for each and every infringement of this rule.

"26. Any person going on or off the stage at any other time or place, or in any other situation than that settled at rehearsal, or leaving the stage before the proper exit, or neglecting to wear the dress fixed on by the Manager, or wearing any apparel inconsistent with the character represented, or for creating unnecessary noise or disturbance behind the scenes, or in the dressing rooms, shall forfeit one night's salary.

"27. Any performer or other person addressing the audience or replying to any of their observations without special permission, shall be subject to the cancellation of his or her engagement, or the forfeiture of three weeks' salary at the option of the Manager.

"28. Any person being called for by the audience, and disobeying such call, if required by the Management, to forfeit a night's salary.

"29. No substitution of language, or of one song for another, or of one piece of music for another, without express permission, will be allowed. Any person thus offending will be subject to the forfeiture of a week's salary for each and every infringement of this rule.

"30. The time of commencing rehearsals and performances is regulated by the green-room clock.

"31. All calls to be made from the green-room after the performances have commenced (unless there be a quick change of dress).

"*Benefit Regulations.*

"32. If any performer, or other person engaged in the theatre, shall take a benefit, or share of a benefit, or put in tickets, the Treasurer shall be at liberty to require the usual

deposit, or to stop and retain the whole of the salary of the person taking such benefit, and to continue stopping and retaining such salary until the deficiency of charges and expenses, and of the amount due from him or her to the Manager shall have been fully paid.

"33. No drama, opera, pantomime, or exhibition of any kind whatever, to be announced for a benefit unless sanctioned by the Management, and any one issuing any bill or notice, without the previous sanction of the Manager, to forfeit one week's salary, or the benefit to be declared void at his option.

"34. No auxiliary aid to be made use of for any benefit unless approved by the Manager. The length and quality also of the performances to be by him decided.

"N.B.—THE RULES WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.

"I hereby agree to abide by the above rules and regulations."*

Disparity in the remuneration of different members of the same company is common to all musical and dramatic undertakings. It is a constant source of grumbling with those who consider themselves ill-used by the unequal division, that Norma should receive 100*l.* a night while Adalgisa must be sometimes satisfied with less than one-fifth of that amount per week. There seems but little chance of the apparent injustice being remedied—the public are alone to blame for it.

* These regulations are here inserted by the kind permission of Mr. F. B. Chatterton.

One popular name is more attractive to the multitude than any *ensemble*, however numerous or perfect its execution. Little blame is indeed to be attached to those who may be lucky enough to have made themselves a reputation, if they ask terms according to their powers of attraction. As long as managers depend upon the public for their receipts, (and it is hard to imagine a state of things which will preclude them from doing so,) it is of course to their interest to engage those artists who are the most attractive, and to surround them with others who shall be efficient, but shall cost as little as possible. A manager who does otherwise will throw money away for which he can expect no return. This is undoubtedly the "star" system against which so much has been said and written; but as a matter of business, it is the only system which pays, and draws the largest receipts with the least risk. The attractive power of one actor or singer is easily ascertained, while that of a combination of artists is very uncertain, compared with the increased expense thereby incurred. These remarks are not perhaps so applicable to

stage plays as to opera. The public will more readily support a comedy well cast throughout, without reference to the individual actors concerned, than they will an opera, however well performed by an efficient company, unless some popular singers appear in the principal rôles. If executants—actors and musicians—complain of being unequally paid for their services, how much greater reason have dramatists and composers to do so? They, very naturally, urge their claim to more substantial reward than they now receive. It is an old story, and one which will have to be told as long as singers and composers, actors and dramatists exist; how the first make their fortunes while the others remain poor, at any rate in this country, under the present law. It is not so much so in France, where, as we have seen, authors' rights are more jealously guarded than they are with us.

The salary list of any large theatre in full working order is a terrific document, and presents a sliding scale of a very precipitate character. In an operatic undertaking, the sopranos and tenors of course stand first, and where they are

"stars" of any magnitude, the figures opposite their names are very high. Then come the contralti, baritones, basses, seconde donne, secondi tenori, comprimarie (or the soprano's "double"), band and chorus (heavy items), conductor, scene-painters, dressmakers, supers, scene-shifters, gas-men, carpenters, box-keepers, accountants, sentinels (the red-coats that parade up and down in front of our Royal Theatres, whose use is as much a matter of fiction as that of soldiers on the stage), and many others. This list is long enough to make the most enterprising Impresario tremble when he thinks what an army of dependants he has around him, and how, in addition to their salaries, he has to find money for rent, advertising, authors, and other incidental expenses, out of the nightly receipts or his own pocket.

> "The consummation of all earthly ills,
> The *actors* and the weekly Bills,"

of a dramatic theatre is of less amount; but the speculation as to its being covered by the receipts is similar, the prices of admission being lower to a play than to an opera house in about the same ratio with the expenses.

The subscriptions, made up by the wealthier habitués and by the booksellers who take boxes and stalls on speculation, in some measure set the opera manager's mind at rest as to his salary list, although his anxiety is not very much diminished; for the subscribers give him trouble enough as a sort of set-off for the pecuniary support they afford. There are very few subscribers to any of our dramatic theatres: even the "Royal Box" in some instances is only paid for when used; so that the result of the manager's undertaking depends entirely upon the nightly receipts, and whether the performances announced prove attractive to the public.

It is remarkable what trifling influences will affect the receipts of a theatre. The slightest interruption to the "run" of a piece will perhaps destroy its attraction altogether, at any rate to an extent that will require time to recover. The second performance of any opera or play draws invariably a worse "house" than the first or third. Political disturbances, or an epidemic, of course cause serious injury to theatres. To provide for such contingencies, all theatrical engagements

contain a clause which releases the manager from his liability in the event of what is technically called a *force majeure* arising, such as fire or public disasters, which may prevent the opening of the theatre with any chance of profit, a most necessary protection for the Impresario, especially in countries where revolutionary tendencies prevail.

CHAPTER VII.

ENGAGEMENTS in the provinces are an important source of income to all who make money by contributing to the amusement of the public. The English provinces are at once the nursery and harvest-field of our singers and actors. There the ambitious tragedian and "walking gentleman" make their first attempts, and go through an arduous course of practice before daring the ordeal of a London *dêbut;* there the rising tenor gets confidence in his high notes, intended hereafter to electrify the good people in Exeter Hall; and there the tragedian, walking gentleman, and celebrated singer return to be received with open arms, and royally rewarded when they have made a successful appearance and acquired a reputation in the metropolis. Although none of the provincial theatres are as large as Drury Lane, Covent Garden, or Her Majesty's, with these exceptions a

comparison of the provincial with the London theatres would probably result in favour of the former; while the Concert Halls in the provinces are far superior to any buildings of the kind to be found elsewhere in Europe—a bold assertion, apparently, but fully justified by the magnificent edifices erected in Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Bradford, Leeds, and the other principal towns, for the purposes of public meetings and musical performances. It is discreditable to the musical societies of London that they have not followed the example set them by the sister societies of Liverpool and Manchester, and built a Concert Hall better adapted to the requirements of the art than the concert rooms which at present exist in the metropolis. In Liverpool, notwithstanding the close proximity of St. George's Hall, the Philharmonic Society has a room of its own—a model building in every respect; in Manchester, almost next door to the Free Trade Hall, the Gentlemen's Concert Room, belonging to the society whose name it bears, is admirably constructed for its purpose; but in London, where there are no splendid St. George's or Free Trade

Halls, and where the musical societies are richer than those of any other city, there is no building in which performances on a large scale can be given with adequate effect. It is surprising such a want should not be supplied, considering that the Sacred Harmonic, the Philharmonic, and other musical societies, might singly or by co-operation provide an edifice that should be worthy of the progress music has made among us, and be, at the same time, an honourable tribute to the art that has so much enriched their treasuries. Had the intentions of the original promoter of St. James's Hall been carried out, a much larger building would have been erected on that site, the most favourable in London, than that which has caused so much disappointment. By trying to combine a Restaurant and a Concert Hall on a space barely enough for either, the success of both was sacrificed, and an opportunity, such as rarely occurs, of erecting a fine hall completely thrown away. Byron's *jeu de mot* in the Leicester Square Statue Scene in "*Little Don Giovanni*" applies forcibly to St. James's Hall, and all other buildings of the kind, as well as to statues in

the metropolis. *Leporello* is asked by the *Don* why the statue will not reply to his questions:

Leporello. He won't reply.
Don Giovanni, Why not?
Leporello. He can't, sir,—
None of our public statues ever *answer.*

By some it will be said that the Crystal Palace supplies the want. But the Crystal Palace has many acoustic defects, which the very nature of the building renders irremediable, and which defects have, strangely enough, been aggravated by those under whose direction the local arrangements for the musical performances in the transept have been made. In defiance of the first law of acoustics, the performers hitherto have been placed *above* the audience, the result being that the body of sound emanating from the thousands of performers brought together at the Handel Festival lost much in effect, not in fact reaching the listeners on the floor of the transept, until reverberated by the roof of the building. The best places for hearing were the upper galleries, from which, for obvious reasons, the public were excluded. There every note was heard—

even the words Sims Reeves sang being quite as audible as when declaimed by the great singer in Exeter Hall. Were the positions of the performers and listeners reversed, music would undoubtedly be well heard in every part of the transept, and the space be far easier for solo singers to sing in, although if that part of the Crystal Palace is ever to be converted into a proper Monster Concert Hall, it will be necessary to close in the sides, and so prevent the sound being lost in the long aisles of the building. Sound, like water, disperses unless prevented; the tendency of water being to fall, and that of sound to rise.

A proposal was made some four or five years ago, by the same enterprising Impresario who gave the first concert at the Crystal Palace, to erect a stage of colossal proportions in the transept, for the purpose of performing such operas as "*Norma*," "*Guillaume Tell*," and others by daylight, and by a band and chorus one or two thousand strong. The advice of Grieve and Telbin was asked as to the practicability of producing effect with scenery and costumes without the aid of gas, and plans were made by those

eminent scene-painters, who were delighted with the idea, showing how it could be carried out. The intention in this instance was that the audience part of the transept should form the half-circle of a vast amphitheatre with a shelving floor. The proposal was declined, the reason assigned being that the expense would be too great. The cost, however, would have been far less than that incurred for the Handel Festivals, where to my mind much good money was thrown away in constructing an orchestra in a wrong position, and bringing together a large number of performers, many of whom were uselessly employed in playing and singing where they could hardly be heard by those who came to listen to them. The performance of opera in the transept, as proposed, would have more reality—more effect in colour and grouping—than any stage representation that was ever given. Although thrown aside for the present, the suggestion may some day be carried out, and we may yet witness Rossini's "*Mosé*" and Handel's "*Israel in Egypt*" more grandly performed than they have ever yet been; and we shall then wonder why

such a source of income to the Crystal Palace was so long neglected, while Dramatic Fêtes and Christmas Entertainments were allowed to degrade the Art and the Building they were supposed to encourage and support. The smaller concert-room at the Crystal Palace cannot be considered as a substitute for such a hall as is wanted in London. It has certainly been much improved lately, and is, in some respects, a good music-room. Formerly it was a lamentable place. At one of the afternoon concerts a few seasons ago, I was quite unable to get within earshot of the performers, and was standing patiently behind the crowd waiting to find a seat. It was before the room was closed in, and, the audience being very numerous, extended far beyond the usual limits.

Presently a friend who was with me said, "Reeves is singing now."

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Oh, I can *see* him;" and he pointed to the popular tenor, who was on the platform evidently doing his best, opening and shutting his mouth, throwing his head back, gesticulating gracefully

—but all to no purpose, being quite inaudible as far as we were concerned, although we were supposed to be *in* the concert-room. After that it never surprised me that Sims Reeves should ask a hundred guineas to sing at the Crystal Palace, although I often wondered that he should do so in such a place on any terms.

CHAPTER VIII.

To return to the provinces. The facilities of communication between London and the provincial towns have destroyed the monopoly of all that was new in music and the drama—formerly almost the exclusive privilege of the metropolis. England at the present day has not inaptly been compared to one large town with iron streets; the communication with every part of the kingdom is so rapid and so constant, that distance is no longer an obstacle to one branch of the vast community called the British public participating in the advantages enjoyed by any other. Public amusements have been affected to an extraordinary degree by the great change brought about by railroads. A new play makes a hit in London; it is forthwith produced—and quite as well put upon the stage—in Liverpool, Manchester,

and other theatrical districts of the one gigantic city. Pantomimes are transplanted bodily from one theatre to another, no matter how far apart; and the same scenery, properties, and dresses that have delighted thousands in the metropolis are exhibited on the boards of the Manchester Theatre Royal, to excite the admiration of thousands more. A new soprano makes her *début* in London, and will most likely, the same week of her first appearance, be judged by the critical audiences of the Liverpool and Dublin Philharmonics, as well as by the Manchester *cognoscenti*.

It was very different twenty or thirty years ago, when the advent of a musical or dramatic London celebrity in any provincial town was looked forward to and talked of as an event of public importance. In those days, enterprising Impresarios used to engage half-a-dozen singers to form a concert party, buy two travelling carriages to carry them about in, and so take them to those towns that were nearest to one another. Grisi's first visit to the provinces was made after that fashion; and I have heard

her describe the pleasures, pains, and penalties of the road; how, on one occasion, the post-boys of the carriage she was in took her from Chatsworth to Matlock, instead of to Sheffield. They had lost sight of the carriage which preceded them, and had mistaken their instructions. Grisi alighted at Matlock with her travelling companions; there were no signs of the rest of the party, and none whatever of any concert going to take place. "*Che fare, per Bacco!*" The landlord of the inn was at a loss to know what to do with the foreigners, none of whom spoke English. After a great deal of dumb show and pantomime, Grisi opened her desk, and discovered that the concert that evening was to be at Sheffield. "Sheffield," she said to the landlord. "Sheffield is a very long way off, this is Matlock;" on hearing which, Grisi understood enough English to know a mistake had been made, and getting into the carriage again ordered the postilions to drive as hard as they could to Sheffield. Whether it was for "her siller bright or for the winsome lady," Grisi does not say; but after great exertions on the part of the boys and horses, the travellers

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reached Sheffield just in time to prevent the public from being dismissed without hearing the Diva. Tamburini and Benedict had done their utmost to prevent complete disappointment—the baritone having sung several songs and got into a very bad temper at the absence of the soprano, who was then much younger than some of us remember her, and full of mischief. Tamburini declared it was a practical joke, and had told the unhappy Impresario he would sing no more, having, in fact, exhausted his concert repertoire, when the long looked-for absentees came into the green-room, and volunteered to finish the concert in their travelling costume with one condition, —that time should be allowed them to eat a sandwich.

Provincial concert touring in post-chaises was a matter of greater difficulty, expense, and inconvenience than any enterprising Impresario of the present day can possibly imagine.

As railways have increased and multiplied, the formation of what are called Touring-parties, for the purpose of giving concerts and operas in the provinces, has become the business of many a

Manager. Formerly these undertakings were only attempted by one or two sagacious Impresarios, whose genius for catering for the public led them to extend their plan of operations beyond the limits of one town, and to become the contractors for musical and operatic entertainments on a large scale for the whole of England. They did immense service to the Art; by their combinations, good music, which, thirty years ago was a much more expensive luxury than it is now, was performed by the first artists of the day in the different towns where it could otherwise never have been heard. They invested capital in the cause of music; engaged singers at what appeared reckless terms; paid all their living, and travelling expenses; treated them like princes. They yet made money by their dealings with the provincial Managers, who were glad to arrange for the appearance of a party rather than engage the artists separately—a much more speculative plan, and a most perilous undertaking in the coaching days of old. They encouraged young aspirants to fame, by associating them with those who had already attained celebrity. To the practice afforded by a

provincial tour many a popular favourite owes the proficiency by which alone distinction is to be acquired.

Touring remained for some time practically a monopoly—the capital and knowledge indispensable for such undertakings being possessed by but very few Managers. After a while, however, the difficulties of travelling being reduced to a minimum, and the profits of touring being much larger in repute than in reality, the example of the early musical contractors was followed by imitators innumerable, and the country overrun—as it still is—with Touring-parties, until the custom of artists of every description engaging themselves to a Manager for the provinces has become more general than that they should perform or sing out of London on their own account.

Young beginners are especially anxious to make such an arrangement with a Manager, who will for his own sake enhance their reputation. Artists who are attractive to the public, and can command their own terms in the country, are more independent of the Impresario—the ladder perhaps by

which they have attained their enviable position. In the outset of their career, they probably have been under engagement to a Manager who employed every means in his power to make their name; for the short time he may have been interested in their success. The engagement terminates; but the effect of all the Impresario has done for the artist remains, and if there be talent to sustain the reputation, the benefit to the artist endures long after all the efforts of the Impresario are forgotten. By those who are struggling for distinction, it is considered a great point to get taken up by a Manager who knows all the depths and shoals of honour, and finds them a way to rise—a sure and safe one. An "Entertainer," who, as the Americans say, had been "going round" on his own speculation, without deriving any profit from his monologue performances, was asked by a brother professional how he was getting on.

"Oh!" replied the one questioned, with ill-concealed pride, "Mitchell *farms* me."

"Does he?" said one of the by-standers—"it will take him some time to *cultivate* you."

To make up a Touring-party requires a certain amount of tact and experience. In this, as in many other undertakings, it is advisable to adopt Mrs. Glasse's counsel, "first catch your fish." As a rule, the first thing to be done is to "catch" a soprano and tenor whose reputations have been made by some former Impresario. Having secured your soprano and tenor, the next consideration is how to complete the party. If the soprano and tenor shall have run off with a large bait, and prevented your offering any great temptation in the way of terms to the others, then must the latter be of moderate pretensions, and sing small accordingly; although experience teaches that they often make the most noise. A concert-party should consist of soprano, tenor, contralto, and bass; and if the programme is to be perfect, a pianist and violinist should be included as the *morceaux de resistance.*

In hooking your fish, have a care that they do not overweight you. To avoid this disagreeable contingency, you must take pen, ink, and paper, and calculate your weekly expenses and probable receipts thus:—

Soprano	£200
Contralto	25
Tenor	200
Bass	15
Pianist	50
Violin	30
Conductor	25
	545
Hotel, travelling, and servants, say	150
	695

Call it 700*l.* a-week; and, at the same time, unless your fish be of the very first and freshest water, call it a certain loss, at these terms, of at least 200*l.* on the week's engagement; for you must not calculate, except under extraordinary circumstances, upon an average of more than 60*l.* a-concert for your share. You will have to allow the local Manager, music-seller, or professor, one-third of the gross receipts, for which he undertakes to pay all local expenses, such as room, printing, and advertising (*not* hotel); and you cannot give more than six, or very rarely seven, concerts during the week.

If you can afford to indulge your fancy at such a rate, by all means do so. You will find your Touring-party very pleasant, although somewhat

expensive. But a plan that is sometimes adopted by your wary brother Impresarios is to see how far it is possible to reduce the risks, by securing the profits before embarking in the speculation; and this is even a wiser course than that suggested by the sapient Glasse; and is, moreover, a plan which will considerably lessen your anxiety, and enhance your pleasure during the progress of the enterprise—*if* you can carry it out. To set about this properly, you must get your country correspondents at Manchester and the other towns to say what they will give you for the party you propose bringing together; then see how much it will cost you. It does not require any very great skill to perceive that the difference will be your profit. This delightful plan, however, has its difficulties, which are frequently very discouraging to the ambitious musical contractor. Those artists who have made a reputation know too well their own value to allow a margin in such transactions; and a provincial contract to tempt them must be for a lengthened period, say a month or two, involving a certain risk to the Manager as to whether he can fill up the time profitably or not.

It is impossible to ensure a profit beforehand on every performance when so many are to be given, and the Manager must of necessity speculate upon the attraction of his party in those places where a remunerative engagement is not offered. The towns where profits can be secured are not many; in a tour of six weeks' duration not more than twelve can with certainty be relied on, leaving twenty-four concerts to be given at the risk of the Impresario. One way of reducing the weekly expenses is to engage your party by the month, from date to date, by which means you will have the advantage of getting two or three days more than you would by a weekly contract.

Having determined upon who are to form the party, the next step is to settle upon the route. And this is perhaps the most perplexing question of all to decide—depending, as it necessarily does, upon the local arrangements of the towns that are to be visited. It is, of course, indispensable, that a concert should be given every evening. The Impresario, with Bradshaw in hand, and a map spread out before him, draws up a most charming tour—quite a *voyage de luxe*—for the

whole period of the engagement. Starting from London, he will take his flock of swans (sometimes rudely called by another name), by easy stages to all the principal towns in the United Kingdom. He studies their comfort and the trains, with a view of preventing the necessity of early rising and late dinners. He sends off his proposals to his correspondents in the country, and pleasant little paragraphs appear in the friendly provincial newspapers, announcing the interesting fact, that a most attractive combination of musical talent, under the auspices of the enterprising Impresario, is about to make a tour, and will, it is hoped, be induced to visit the country town in which the particular newspaper appears. Those papers whose columns are open to the encouragement of music and musicians (and it would be difficult to name one whose columns are not so) will find space for biographical sketches of some of the artists announced, and do all in their power to aid the Manager in his undertaking. While waiting for the replies of his correspondents, the Impresario is in a state of intense anxiety. Some answer by return, others have to consult their friends, or

the Directors of the Musical Societies, &c. A few days elapse, and it is found that not one of the dates on which it was proposed to visit the different towns will suit. Then comes the dilemma—and a terrible one it is—of how to make those dates that are chosen fit in with one another. Manchester names October 15th, Plymouth the 16th, Glasgow the 17th. How to reach Glasgow from Plymouth in one day, in time for an evening concert! The Manager looks at the Map in despair—he raves, and tears his hair; and ends by writing to Glasgow and Plymouth, requesting them to fix upon some other days. The replies are adverse. In Glasgow, the next week is either Preaching-week, or some other counter-attraction is already announced. In Plymouth, it might be supposed, from the local Manager's reply, that October 16th was the only day in the whole year when music was tolerated in that remote corner of the world. There is no alternative, but to give up either Plymouth or Glasgow; and that is done accordingly. The next post brings the Impresario still more troublesome news. Bradford, where he had counted on a certain date and a good engage-

ment, writes to put off both indefinitely. At Leeds, a panic in the cloth trade is ruinous to the prospects of all public amusements. At Sheffield, the only room available has been taken by a popular conjuror, who refuses to give it up except for a larger sum than it can possibly be made to hold. Matters begin to look serious with the Impresario, who anticipates the pleasure of having to keep his party idle, or of taking them to places where it is very unlikely they will prove to be remunerative. He has recourse to the telegraph, —changes the route of the tour entirely; and considers himself fortunate if in the end there is no loss upon the undertaking, out of which he expected to make so much.

In the voluminous correspondence that has been going on, he must be very careful that he has not arranged for his party to appear at two places far apart on the same date. Such a mistake has occurred, and the consequences been rather more expensive than pleasant. Considering how easily such an error can be made, it is surprising that it has not been of more frequent occurrence. A question which must inevitably torment every

touring Impresario is how to dispose of the Saturdays. In the country, no public amusements prosper on that day of the week, attributable, I suppose, to its being market-day, or washing-day, or a day on which the good country folk have something else to do than to amuse themselves. It is hopeless to expect an audience on that night of the week, except at Manchester; and the manager uses all his ingenuity to arrange his geographical puzzle so as to be able, as often as possible during the tour, to get to that town on Saturday evenings. Morning concerts will do on Saturdays at Leamington or Bath, but they do not pay so well as the more numerously-attended evening performances on other nights of the week.

Having with the difficulty inseparable therefrom settled the dates of his tour, the Impresario has to decide upon the programmes of the concerts he intends to give. He consults the conductor, and gets the repertoire of each performer. The soprano sends her list of scenas, songs, and grand arias, omitting to mention any duets, trios, or quartetts. These have to be arranged; the basso suggests a trio, of which no one has

ever heard, but which, on trial, is found to contain a splendid solo for the bass and very little for any other voice. The tenor insists upon singing a ballad, his own property, for which he has made a satisfactory arrangement with a music publisher who allows him so much a copy on all copies sold. The ballad must be introduced in every concert, according to the satisfactory arrangement just mentioned. The contralto objects to sing the second piece in the programme; the tenor, basso, and soprano have an instinctive aversion to the same position. The conductor and Impresario reason with them. It is a *point d'honneur* with all four, and difficult to settle. What is to be done? Is No. 2 to be omitted on the Christy principle of taking the third lesson first, because it was half the price of the two previous? The violinist or pianist must be sacrificed; No. 2, the altar on which the immolation is to take place. No. 1. A Quartett. No. 2. Solo Violin. Having got so far, the soprano consents to sing her grand scena; and that being expected to make considerable effect, none of the party care to follow the prima donna. The tenor is asked, but indig-

nantly refuses; the basso declares that his reputation, past, present, and future, depends upon his having a good place in this particular programme; the contralto, with some show of reason, contends that two female voices will not sound well following each other. The conductor ponders, and, with a stumpy pencil, hitherto concealed in his waistcoat pocket, draws out a skeleton programme, which he believes will meet the wishes of all concerned. No. 3, according to his suggestion, is a duet by the two ladies; No. 4, the basso; and No. 5, another instrumental solo; No. 6, the tenor. The tenor smiles—he is happy, having the post of honour, at any rate in the first part of the programme; but his serenity is of short duration, for he sees, lower down, in Part II., that his ballad comes last but one in the skeleton list. This will never do. The music publisher, and the satisfactory arrangement—the sixpence a copy—flash before him, and he revolts. The ballad must come No. 2 in the second part, after the instrumental duet. To this No. 2, the soprano, basso, and contralto adhere with as much pertinacity as they had avoided the same No. in the beginning of

the concert. The tenor has to give way, and sing the ballad later on, an arrangement to which he submits with a tolerably fair grace. After much consultation and long delay, the programme is at length completed, every artist, however, protesting against being the last but one, the contralto being at length persuaded that "Il Segreto" will do better there than elsewhere. It is printed, and sent off to the country for the approval of the Impresario's correspondents. By return of post, innumerable suggestions are received. The programme will not do. The same grand scena was sung by the soprano the very last time she was at Liverpool. Manchester wishes the tenor to name a more classical piece than he has selected (a gentle hint at the ballad not being considered classical). Newcastle has a special request that the party will sing a quartett composed by a celebrated professor (unknown in any other part of the country)—in short, every town to which the programme has been sent has some changes to propose, which add to the troubles of the Impresario, and tend to convince him that touring is not the agreeable sinecure he was led to expect. The

route and programme being finally arranged, the day arrives for the commencement of the tour, the preparations for which have taken perhaps two months to make.

CHAPTER IX.

THE tour during which my personal experience of such matters was acquired took place some two or three years ago. Whether I was Impresario, tenor, or basso in the undertaking is not of much importance; suffice it to say, I was certainly neither the prima donna nor contralto.

We were eight in party. The tour was made during August and September, shortly after the London season. The first concert being announced at Birmingham, we were to start from Euston Square Station. Notice had been sent round to the artists a few days previously, that we should all meet at the Railway on a certain day, at 9 A.M.

I was requested to escort the prima donna of the party, whose acquaintance I had made abroad, and on the morning we were to leave London, went, for that purpose, to the hotel at which she

was staying. The lady had arrived from the Continent the evening before, and had hardly recovered from the effects of the sea passage; neither had her companions, one of whom she was nursing tenderly, while the other was being fed by a careful attendant. The lady was at breakfast in her bonnet and shawl when I was shown into the room.

"*Bon jour, monsieur—je suis prête, comme vous voyez, mais c'est très matinal n'est-ce pas?*"

I replied that it was undoubtedly early to make a call; but as the train started at 9.30, there was not much time to lose.

"*Je suis à vos ordres, mais mon pauvre Jacko, il a été si malade la nuit, il faut absolument que je le soigne, et voilà Bibi qui n'a pas encore fini son déjeûner. Pauvre Bibi, viens ici.*"

"Pauvre Bibi" was a wretched, half-shaved French poodle, and Jacko nothing more nor less than a pet monkey, that the charming soprano was nursing with all the affection she would have lavished upon a child. Jacko was jealous of his mistress, and showed his teeth to anyone who dared approach her. Bibi was the more auda-

cious of the two, and either from sympathy or antipathy, indulged himself (or perhaps, more correctly, herself) in tearing the trousers of all strangers. He (or she) neither snarled nor barked, but made his (or her) attacks quietly and effectively.

I had been seated opposite the prima donna some five minutes, making myself as agreeable as it was possible to be at that early hour of the morning, when suddenly I felt a sharp pinch just above the ankle, and looking down, found Bibi had forsaken his (or her) *déjeûner* in favour of my leg. The *dame de compagnie* was watching the poodle with intense interest, and seemed to enjoy with barbarian delight the confusion of my unhappy self.

"*Bibi! Bibi! Méchant enfant, que fais tu donc?*"

"*Mais, madame, il m'a pris par la jambe,*" I replied for Bibi, and tried to release my leg by a violent effort, but he (or she) hung on to my trousers, and would not let go until Madame came round and seized him adroitly by the tail. The movement the lady made excited Jacko, who was

still in her arms, and who, supposing me to be the cause of the commotion, made a grab at my hair, of which he succeeded in pulling out a quantity. In this pleasant way the time passed until we were obliged to hurry off to catch the train.

The prima donna, Bibi, Jacko, and the *dame de compagnie* were put into a cab. I followed in a Hansom, contemplating at my leisure the pleasure that such delightful companions as the two pet quadrupeds would surely afford the touring-party we were going to join.

The lady's luggage, consisting of three boxes, each large enough for an Aztec family of moderate pretensions to live in—those gigantic trunks that are made only in France,—bonnet boxes, and Bibi and Jacko's sleeping apartments, were more than enough for cab No. 3.

We reached the station ten minutes before the train was to start, and found some of the party had arrived before us. The contralto, with her mamma (a shrivelled-up old lady), was introduced with much ceremony to the soprano. The tenor—dressed in a very new travelling suit, with a heavy watch-chain, from which hung

"charms" of every fanciful description, a white silk neck-tie carelessly (but what study in the carelessness!) fastened by a gold ring set with precious stones, straw-coloured kid gloves, and the very tightest of patent leather boots—came up and shook hands with the lady, being of course saluted by Bibi and clutched at by Jacko.

The basso—a German—in his native country must have heard strange stories of an English climate, for he was smothered in furs. He had a fur coat, a fur cap, fur boots, and was in every way fitted out for a severe Siberian winter. He seemed, however, to enjoy his furs, and to like being looked at, as he was to his heart's content, by the wondering passers by.

With the luggage we had a huge case containing what one of the party called his "baby." It was large enough to hold any number of babies, and was the case of a double bass. This unusual travelling companion caused the railway porters no little diversion, and the cabmen a reasonable pretext for a double fare.

It was within five minutes of the time of starting, and the violinist and conductor had not

yet made their appearance. The Impresario got anxious. He paced the pavement outside the booking-office impatiently, looking with pardonable curiosity into every cab that came up. He returned to the platform to see that those who had arrived were seated in the carriage reserved for them. Presently the violin followed him. It was carried by a most remarkable-looking little Italian, short in stature, of sallow complexion, with hair somewhat *à la Paganini*, and prodigious eyes, of which he made good use to give expression to every word he said—they rolled about like two highly-polished balls of jet;—a genius in appearance, as he was in reality, for it was no other than Camillo Sivori.

"Just in time," said the Impresario.

"*Si*," said Sivori, "*sono sempre à tempo.*"

"But where's the maestro?" asked the tenor from inside the carriage.

"*Paga il cabbe*," replied Sivori.

The Impresario went in search of the conductor, who had been left by the celebrated violinist to pay the cab, and found him in angry discussion with the cabman, who loudly demanded

double that which had been offered him. The dispute was settled to the satisfaction of all concerned, by the Impresario paying the fare himself, and the whole of the party were got into the train just as it was set in motion.

It was a lovely morning. The sunshine and fresh air, the desire of making a favourable impression upon each other, the novelty of all around them, and the prospect of a pleasant tour, induced every one to be as agreeable as possible.

We were six in our carriage, or rather eight, counting Bibi and Jacko, who had up to the moment of starting been kept in durance vile, one in the muff of the soprano, the other under the shawl of the *dame de compagnie*. As soon as we were out of reach of inquisitive railway guards and porters, these two lay members of the touring-party made their appearance, and were introduced to their less fortunate *compagnons de voyage*. Jacko went through an impromptu trapèze performance among the straps and hangings of the carriage, alighting now and then on the head and shoulders of the tenor,

who was seated opposite the prima donna, trying to look good tempered under the circumstances. Bibi found it more according to his (or her) taste to wander about unseen under the seats, where he (or she) could quietly and at will indulge his (or her) fancy for legs and trousers.

The basso, who for some time had been silent in his furs, suddenly gave a start—

"*Mein Gott! Was ist das?*"

He jumped up, and at the same time seized Bibi by the throat, interrupting him (or her) in the innocent recreation of gnawing the fur boots.

The prima donna gave a gentle scream, and rescued her favourite from the grasp of the startled basso.

"It makes nothing," said the latter; "de leetle tog has only made von beeg hole in my poot."

"*Je le regrette, monsieur, infiniment, et je le punirai,*" and Bibi was accordingly punished by being forced to remain quiet for ten minutes in the soprano's lap.

The Impresario, in the farther corner of the

carriage, was occupied with the memoranda of the money he had spent in cabs, railway tickets, and other items.

The contralto's mamma ventured to remark what a heavy expense the travelling of such a party must be.

"It is indeed," said the manager.

"But you are allowed many privileges by the railway companies, are you not?"

"Not one," replied the Impresario. "Nothing of the sort is allowed in England. A meeting of the managers of the principal lines took place at Derby some seven years ago to consider the question. Up to that time, certain privileges had been conceded to Jullien and others who travelled with large numbers; but it was then resolved that no reductions whatever should be made, no matter how many were included in the same party, and since then we have had to pay the same fares as the rest of the public."

"It seems very unreasonable," said the contralto's mamma; "for these touring-parties must be the means of bringing large custom to the railways."

"And so it is," replied the Impresario. "Moreover, the want of liberality on the part of the railway authorities in this respect retards to a certain extent the progress of music in England. Were the expenses of travelling reduced, singers and musicians generally would more frequently visit the provinces than they do at present."

The contralto's mamma agreed with the Impresario, and then left him to his calculations and joined her daughter, who was engaged in an animated conversation with the German basso. Bottesini, the gifted owner of the monster "baby," was seated in the middle seat of the carriage. He paid but little attention to the rest of the party, although he seemed as anxious for the welfare of Bibi and Jacko as was the soprano herself. Wrapped in a military cloak, he tried to make amends for having risen so early by taking a nap. This, however, was impossible as long as Jacko was awake; so a compromise was effected by the tyrant being allowed a snug retreat under the cloak, where he remained for a short time, to the great comfort of the tenor, who was rather out of sorts with the trapèze

performance which had been going on since the commencement of the journey.

Conversation flagging, the tenor proposed a game of forfeits to the prima donna—a game, under these circumstances, played out of the carriage window; the players betting as to who would see the most birds or animals as the train went along. The prima donna was amused by the excitement of counting all the birds she could see. However, she soon got tired, and was, moreover, somewhat disheartened by one of the party suggesting that he saw a couple of donkeys which both players had missed. Whether the allusion was personal or not (for the sake of politeness, let us hope it was not), it put an end to the game.

On the train stopping at Rugby, the basso alighted to get some refreshment—to shake his furs and show himself. His singular appearance on a hot August day caused a sensation, as might have been expected. Whether he was taken for a Russian prince—Russian princes being, I believe, popularly supposed to be born and live in sables—or for an escaped lunatic, I cannot say; at any

rate he made an effect which perhaps gratified his vanity, and certainly did no harm to any one. During his absence from our carriage, the conductor, who had so far travelled with Sivori in a separate compartment, took his place. He was one of those men whose age it is impossible to guess. His bright complexion, and clear skin without the trace of a wrinkle, upset the opinion that his grey hair which showed itself in curly profusion from underneath his travelling cap might lead you to form. A luxuriant beard, almost as white as snow, made a handsome outline to his good-looking countenance. He wore spectacles as big as gig-lamps. Yet, notwithstanding the grey curls, white beard, and spectacles, I would defy you to tell his age. By some he is called the veteran composer; but looking at him you would not say the appellation was appropriate, although to conclude that he was a juvenile composer would be equally erroneous. His music smacks of the old school—he has an idolatrous veneration for Bach and Handel. On presenting himself at the door of the carriage, he was loudly welcomed, and made to change places with the basso. He was

saluted as "the Sultan:" he is, however, universally known as J. L. Hatton, a name which his remarkable talent has made popular. The Sultan, though sufficiently corpulent to be comfortable, took up much less room than the furs, and was a pleasant change in many respects; his jovial face being more agreeable to behold than the melancholy features of the chilly basso. He fraternised cordially with Bottesini, to whom he offered his snuff-box, in which the Sultan himself indulged so freely that his waistcoat and shooting jacket were soon covered with streams of Lundy Foot, the dust of which pervaded the carriage, making the sensitive tenor sneeze violently in spite of himself.

"*Molto buono*," said the Sultan, taking another pinch more copious than the first.

"*Eccellente*," replied Bottesini, who, however, had not done much more than look at the snuff, which he still held carefully between his finger and thumb. The prima donna asked the Sultan if he would try over some of the music she had to sing, as soon as they arrived at Birmingham. The Sultan, of course, said he should be delighted, but that the lady need be under no apprehension as to

the music not going well. He knew it all, and would be responsible for any mistakes.

"You sing 'Fat Man'?" asked Bottesini.

"Yes," said Hatton, "I shall sing 'The Little Fat Man,' although the Town Hall *è troppo grande per me.*"

"What solo shall you play, Sultan?" asked the Impresario. "You are down for one, but the name of the piece is not mentioned."

"I hardly know," said Hatton; "I am almost afraid of playing a fugue after what I was told last week."

"And what was that?" asked the contralto.

"Why a friend of mine, who knew I was playing at Willis's Rooms, asked a lady who had been there, how she liked the piano-forte music—it was during the Glee and Madrigal concerts—when she declared there was none performed. My friend assured her she must be mistaken, for that I was announced, when she said the only instrumental music she had heard was when some one came in between the parts to tune the piano."

"Oh, that's too bad!" exclaimed the contralto.

"And it happened on that particular evening," continued the Sultan, "I played two of the finest of Bach's fugues."

"You must not allow that to prevent your letting us hear them to-night," said the Impresario.

"Well, we'll see, *vedremo*—if the piano is a good one, you shall have a bit of Bach." The Sultan took another pinch, replaced his box, folded his arms, and prepared himself for sweet repose—which, notwithstanding his having so recently come among us, he soon accomplished. We did not disturb him, but watched his approaching slumbers with interest. He nodded gently at first, then more heavily, but occasionally tried to keep his head up. In a few minutes one ponderous nod jerked off his travelling cap, which fell upon the floor. This made him open his eyes for a second—not longer, he saw what had happened, his head sank on his chest, and he slept profoundly.

"*Bella testa!*" whispered Bottesini, as the cranium of the Sultan was exposed to view. We all agreed with him.

Presently the slumberer snored; louder and louder became his stertorous breathings, until

one deep roar woke him up, and when not half awake he put his hand mechanically into his pocket for the snuff-box. It was not there. This startled and completely roused him—more effectually perhaps than any noise could have done. He looked about, and found it at last concealed in a corner of the seat. The recovery of the lost treasure was a great relief to the anxiety of the Sultan, for which he rewarded himself with a larger pinch of snuff than usual, and then settled down to read a newspaper which he had found in some deep recess of his pockets while searching for the snuff-box.

We reached Birmingham about two o'clock.

While waiting outside the station, where the tickets are collected, a railway guard came to the window next which the prima donna was sitting, and asked for a ticket for the dog. Bibi's mistress did not understand the question, but was taking great pains to conceal her favourite, who on his (or her) part did all that a dog could do to become conspicuous. There was no ticket for the four-footed foreigner, and madame was wickedly told by one of the party she would have to give up her

pet. Great was her alarm. She proposed offering the ticket collector any sum rather than sacrifice Bibi. The difficulty was at length got over by the Impresario asking what was to pay, and paying it. Jacko, being still in the care of Bottesini, was left to travel unmolested at the railway company's expense.

On arriving at the Birmingham station, we were received by a body of hotel porters, who had come to look after us. Although experience should have made them familiar with such matters, they were evidently amazed at the colossal proportions of our luggage. Piled up on the platform as it was taken out of the van, with the double-bass towering in its midst, it looked more like the belongings of a family of giants than the boxes containing the wearing apparel of ordinary sized individuals. It was all carefully removed to the hotel, the entrance to which it completely blocked up for some time. The party were shown their rooms, and informed by the host that dinner would be ready, as ordered, at three o'clock. The Impresario dispatched a messenger to the concert-giver of the evening, to inform him the artists had

arrived, and that all were well. Music was presently heard in every part of the hotel. The basso, who had cast his furs, was trying his low notes, and they issued from his room at the end of the corridor like the growlings of an ophicleide. The prima donna, in her apartment next to the general sitting-room, practised her solfeggi while she combed the little white hair the razor had left on Bibi's back. The tenor had taken possession of the piano in the sitting-room, and had made the Sultan sit down to teach him the ballad that was to be such a success. The contralto tried the shake in "Il Segreto," while her mamma unpacked the boxes; and from a room that had been engaged by one of the party could be heard the subdued sound of a violin. If you went in, you would have found Sivori sitting on the side of the bed, working away at some new effect, or perhaps amusing himself with overcoming some altogether impossible difficulty. He made less noise than any of the rest, always having the mute on the instrument when he practised, which no one ever did more assiduously than the indefatigable little fiddler.

CHAPTER X.

THE only one of the party who seemed to have forgotten all about the concert in the evening was Bottesini. He had seen that his "baby" was all right, and that appeared to be all that was necessary for him to do. He lounged about or read, while the rest were sounding the dreadful notes of preparation, although, indeed, after this, the first day of the tour, all the party except Sivori followed his example, and left their scales and exercises, being satisfied with the practice which their daily appearance in public afforded. At three o'clock, or a little later, we sat down to dinner, the Impresario at the head of the table, the soprano and contralto on his right and left. The Sultan was vice-president, and never seemed better employed, not even when threading the intricate ways and by-ways of a *fugue* by Bach, than when dissecting a boiled fowl. The *menu* was one

which you will meet with at every hotel in the United Kingdom if you leave the ordering of your dinner to the landlord—to wit, ox-tail soup, codfish, and oyster sauce, saddle of mutton, boiled fowls, and some very indigestible pastry. I have seen a little of the provinces, and can safely declare that the provincial hotel-keeper has, as a rule, no idea of a bill of fare beyond what I have mentioned. The Sultan was aware of the fact, and knew what we should have to eat throughout the tour, if precautionary measures were not adopted. He volunteered to undertake the commissariat branch of the expedition, if the names of the hotels at which we were expected were given him. This the Impresario readily consented to do, and the Sultan catered so successfully for us that we did not see oftener than was agreeable the before-mentioned standard dishes of England. It may appear fastidious to object to them; but delicious as they may be, and substantial as they undoubtedly are, it is a serious matter to have nothing else put before one daily for six weeks running; and that would have been our fate had not the Sultan generously devoted himself to our dining interests.

"We must ring the bell again," said the Impresario, rising to do so; "it is most provoking that the attendance should be so bad."

He rang the bell more violently than usual without any effect.

"They will perhaps treat us as they did at Norwich last year," continued the manager.

"How was that?" asked the contralto's mamma.

"By leaving us to attend to ourselves," explained the Impresario. "We were a large party," he continued, "staying during the Festival at one of the principal hotels. The house was full, and there appeared to be more to do than the waiters could possibly get through. One day at dinner we had waited some twenty minutes between the courses, and got very impatient. Everyone at table had a pull at the bell, but all to no purpose. Our patience was completely exhausted. At last I was, I confess, so exasperated that I pulled the bell so hard that the handle came off. Shortly after a waiter, puffing and blowing, and with a very greasy countenance, put his head inside the door, and demanded, in a loud voice,

'Who rang that bell?' 'I did,' I exclaimed. 'Then don't do it again,' said the greasy waiter, and slammed the door, leaving us no better off than we were before, although his unusual mode of proceeding put us into rather better temper than we had been previously."

"And what did you do?" asked the Sultan.

"What we could. We had had the joint, so were not quite starving, as we are now," saying which, the Impresario went to the door and sent a servant, who was standing in the corridor, for the waiters, several of whom quickly made their appearance. It appeared that some former excitable occupant of the room had—as the Impresario had done at Norwich—pulled the bell down, and that, consequently, all our efforts to make our wants known had been useless. With much bustling about and creaking of their boots, the waiters served us all, and dinner was quickly over. After dessert, during which Jacko made his appearance, and exhibited great skill in cracking nuts, we dispersed; some went to their rooms, others to look at the town. The prima donna and contralto arranged the cadences they were to sing

in the duet at the concert; and the Sultan sent for his portfolio containing the music, to see that the latter was correct according to the programme of the evening.

The concert was announced to commence at eight o'clock. At half-past seven, most of the party had assembled in the sitting-room, previous to starting for the concert hall. Sivori, with his violin-case, which he rarely let out of sight, was the first. He went to the piano, and amused himself, while waiting for the others, with extemporising some very abstruse harmonies. A pianoforte seems to offer an irresistible temptation even to those who can strike only a few chords upon it. You go into a room and see a piano—it may be the veriest tin kettle in existence, but I will defy you to resist trying it—that is to say, if you can play at all. There seems to be some subtle attraction in the keys, you yield from sheer inability to withstand the charm, although you may repent doing so, for the same reason you are vexed when a veiled woman elegantly dressed reveals an ugly face. The notes may have a disagreeable tone, although the outside of the instrument be of

the handsomest description; but, on the other hand, an old broken-down pianoforte in a shabby case—one that you thought not worth trying, although you could not help going to it, may be most sympathetic, far more pleasant to your touch and hearing, than the finest new model grand ever manufactured. The cause of this sympathy and antipathy in musical sounds is difficult—nay, impossible to explain; why some sounds should be agreeable to some ears, and harsh to others. The quality of sympathy in the human voice is equally indefinable; it exists, but still more ineffably, in the touch of some performers on the different musical instruments. It cannot be acquired, it must be innate. Its presence compensates for many practical deficiencies; without it, the most perfect mechanical facility may excite the wonder and admiration, but never the emotions, of an audience. Sivori had been rambling, and had more than once nearly lost himself in intricate discords, resolutions, progressions, and modulations for some ten minutes, when all the party were assembled in evening dress, ready for the concert. The carriages were announced, and we proceeded to follow

the Impresario, who led the way down-stairs with the prima donna under his arm. Had we been a wedding party, we could not have excited greater curiosity in the hotel. All the servants were in the corridors and on the stairs, to get a good view of the lions who were going to exhibit themselves. We reached the Town Hall in good time, the first familiar object that presented itself being the "baby" in its case. Bottesini carefully released his infant from its prison, and inspected it with paternal solicitude as to its strings and condition in general. Sivori took out his child, which was still more providently housed than that of Bottesini—lying on velvet, and wrapped in the softest of silk pocket-handkerchiefs. The tuning commenced, the singers tried their voices; after he had picked out the music for the first part, the Sultan looked at his watch, and said it was time to begin.

"*Cominciamo*," he explained to the Italians.

The local manager, in whose name the concert was given, came into the waiting-room and declared it was long past the hour of commencement.

"All right," said Hatton, "we are quite ready," and the Sultan conducted the ladies on to the platform, where they were joined by the tenor and bass.

Everything went off well. The singers were in good voice. Sivori and Bottesini never played better. No artists possess in a greater degree all the necessary qualifications for success than do these two wonderful exécutants. Marvellous mechanical power, combined with an exquisite sympathy of tone, make their performances the most effective treat it is possible to listen to. The tenor was satisfied with the first appearance of the ballad, which he now considered good for many thousand sixpences during the following few months.

The ladies were enthusiastically applauded, and the Sultan made everybody's sides ache with the "Little Fat Man," to hear which all his travelling companions rushed to the door leading to the platform, and enjoyed it as much as, if not more than, the public; for they were sensible of the artistic excellence, as well as of the facetious character of the performance. The Impresario was disappointed

in the fugue, for which was substituted another song from the Sultan.

The concert over, the party returned to the hotel, having had some difficulty in finding their carriages.

It was found that Jacko and Bibi had not been idle during our absence. A maid servant, who had imprudently interfered with them during the prima donna's absence, had been made to regret her rashness. She did not show herself, but we were told that Jacko had torn her cap and scratched her face, and that Bibi had been guilty of great violence. There was no doubt that something serious had happened, for the monkey had taken refuge up in the curtains of the sitting-room, and no coaxing could get him out of them. His mistress addressed him in endearing terms—she threatened him with severe punishment; but all to no purpose. Jacko was sulky, and looked down upon us sullenly. There he remained until next day, when the pangs of hunger brought him to reason and within our reach.

We had supper, which was, in fact, dinner repeated, with the difference that the Sultan had

ordered it, and we, therefore, had a little more variety than at the former meal.

After supper, the basso and Bottesini paired off for a game at dominos, at which Sivori looked on; the Impresario made up his accounts; the ladies chatted a short time; an hour passed by, some one remarked that it was twelve o'clock, when all the party thought it was time to go to bed, and the first day of the tour ended accordingly.

CHAPTER XI.

THE next morning we were called early to start for Manchester, where the second concert was to take place.

Early rising—if breakfasting at nine o'clock can be said to necessitate early rising—was not in accordance with the tastes and habits of some of the party. The basso, who looked rather more yellow than the day before, took his seat at the breakfast-table without noticing any of us.

It had been agreed that we should not wait for each other, but order what we wanted, and breakfast as soon as we came down.

The contralto and her mamma were the first at table, and undertook to make tea—a duty rather irksome, considering how long it lasted. The Sultan came next, and was the object of especial attention on the part of the waiters, in whose opinion he was evidently the father of the party,

either from his commanding appearance, or the fact of his having given such particular orders about the supper the previous evening. And a hearty meal he made, finishing with half a dozen boiled eggs beaten up in a tea-cup (carefully warmed by the cunning epicure), bread crumbs, and fresh butter, seasoned with cayenne pepper, and judiciously flavoured with a few anchovies—a splendid composition, worthy of Czapek, and one well worth trying.

The prima donna was more anxious about her pets than herself, and wholly neglected her own breakfast in looking after theirs. They were in a strange country, she said, and should have every care taken of them.

Bottesini, in his own delightfully philosophical way, was as usual indifferent to what was brought him. There surely never was a more easily contented human being than this musical magician.

Sivori rushed into the room just as we were told that it was time to think of going to the train. With his eyes he devoured everything upon the table, and ended in making his *jenta-*

culum of an egg and a cup of tea, which he took standing, in true old Roman fashion. He had had hard work, he said, in packing his portmanteau. Had the truth been known, I dare say he had been practising, and had forgotten all about the time we were to start.

Sivori's portmanteau is an object worthy of note. It is a veritable Noah's Ark, containing perhaps more curiosities than even that ancient receptacle. I have known it any time for the last fifteen years, and wonder as often as I see it how it holds so long together, and that articles of so much value should be confided to its care. Diamond rings, pins, and studs, are thrown in heedlessly, to get lost among violin strings, cigar cases, and dirty linen. Their owner seems to attach but little importance to them.

"*Andiamo?*" said the Sultan to Sivori.

"*Per dii! aspetta un momento,*" replied Sivori, with his mouth full.

"Yes, I'll wait," replied the Sultan, "but the train won't."

The others had gone on, and there was not a moment to lose. The Sultan took possession of

the violin case, and walked out of the room. Sivori, not liking to lose sight of his treasure, left the egg half finished, and, with a slice of bread and butter in his hand, followed the maestro. The hotel joined the railway station, and all the party were on the platform.

"Shall we have to change carriages?" asked the Impresario of Mr. Cooper, the Birmingham station-master.

"No, sir; I have retained these two compartments for you, and this carriage will go through to Manchester," was the polite reply.

"It's a pity we cannot hit upon some plan of always securing a carriage to ourselves," said the Sultan.

"I have one," answered the Impresario, "and have given instructions for carrying it out."

"And what is it?" asked Hatton.

"I am having two boards made the size of those they use when carriages are reserved, with '*for lunatics only*' painted on them. These we will hang outside our carriage windows when we

arrive at a station, and I don't think any one will care to interfere with us."

The Sultan approved the plan, and hoped the boards would soon be ready.

Having laid in a stock of newspapers—the Birmingham daily papers and those published in London the evening before—the party took their seats, tickets were shown, and the travellers were on their second day's journey.

A small railway chess-board had been purchased at Birmingham, and Sivori and the Sultan commenced a game. It lasted but a short time, the oscillations of the carriage apparently facilitating check-mate.

Chess being monotonous and condemned by the prima donna as a very selfish amusement, vingt-un was suggested.

"But where are the cards?" asked the Impresario.

The question was repeated more than once, and a general desire evinced for a game, when the contralto's mamma confessed she had a pack with which, in her idle moments, she told her fortune or played "patience."

"Brava!" exclaimed the tenor, as the good-natured old lady brought forth from her hand-bag a pack of cards, of which the original colour had long since become invisible.

"I'm afraid they are rather soiled," said the lady, handing them to the Sultan.

"They will do well enough; although, as Charles Lamb used to say, 'if dirt were trumps what hands we should all have,'" said the Impresario.

A railway wrapper was spread carefully across the knees of all in the carriage, and made a very good substitute for a *tapis vert.*

"What are we to play for?" asked one of the party; in answer to which inquiry the stakes, by command of the soprano, were strictly limited to pence.

"And what is to be the highest stake?" asked the Sultan.

"*Trois sous,*" said the prima donna.

"Three-pence! we shall be ruined!" exclaimed the Impresario.

"I will not have it higher," added the fair tyrant.

"*Soit*,"—and the game began.

We played for an hour or more, and had cut up the newspaper for counters. When it was agreed to finish the game, the basso had his pockets full of bits of paper, about ten shillings' worth, having, in fact, won everything.

"Vingt-un is very pretty," he remarked, as he pulled out a handful and placed the bits of paper on the railway wrapper.

The Impresario at this moment opened the window next to which the basso was sitting.

A sudden gust of wind scattered the counters all over the carriage, much to the basso's annoyance.

"*Der Teufel!*" exclaimed the lucky player, as he tried to gather his winnings together. The bits of paper were at length collected, and the pool being distributed, the cards were restored to their rightful owner, who, through their medium, indulged herself with a peep into futurity, and offered to tell everybody's fortune. She made Sivori angry by assuring him that a light-haired lady, who came from a long distance, was waiting for him in Manchester. It is not known whether the great violinist had any reason to expect

that such a prophecy might be realised to his discomfort or not; at all events it did not please him. The basso was told to prepare for a terrible disappointment, and many crosses. He laughed in his furs at the prediction, one which, however, as we shall see, was nearer the truth than such things generally are. The fortune-telling came to an end, and the cards were put back into the hand-bag;—the Impresario promising the lady he would buy some others for her if she would accept them. Whether the excitement of the game had worn them out, or the movement of the train had a somniferous influence upon them, most of the party fell asleep after the cards had disappeared, leaving the Sultan and the Impresario to themselves.

"Sad thing, Jullien's death," said the former, commencing a conversation.

"Yes, indeed," replied the manager, "and a greater loss to music than many are willing to allow. We shall not see his like again. What falsehoods are told," he continued, "about the music published under his name having been written for him by other men."

"He died in a lunatic asylum, did he not?" asked the Sultan.

"Yes, in Paris," said the Impresario.

"His was an extraordinary career. You must have seen a great deal of him," continued Hatton.

"I knew him well, and a more delightful companion you could not wish for, although during the last year or two of his life his manner and conversation were rather strange. There was no subject upon which Jullien could not talk, and on some he talked remarkably well. I remember going with him over St. George's Hall, Liverpool, before it was quite finished. Those who were with us were astonished at the experience and learning in the different schools of architecture Jullien showed by his remarks. Some of the suggestions he made as to the arrangement of the different rooms and law courts were, I believe, adopted."

"He was still in the prime of life when he died, was he not?" asked Hatton.

"Forty-eight was his age. Here," continued the Impresario, putting his hand into his pocket,

"are some memoranda of his career which Madame Jullien gave me just before leaving town. She says," said the manager, reading, "Jullien was born at Sisteron, in the Lower Alps, on April 23, 1812. His mother was an Italian. His father, a Frenchman, was professor of music, and conductor of the band of the Garde Nationale. Jullien gave early indication of his talent for music. The first instrument he learnt to play was the drum, on which he performed in the band when quite a child. Afterwards he studied the violin, and on that instrument was the principal attraction as an infant prodigy at some concerts his father gave in the principal towns in Italy. When a lad, he went on board the man-of-war La Sirène, his father having been appointed conductor of the ship's band. He was present at the battle of Navarino. His father being ill, he did duty for him as conductor; and the admiral wishing to hear some of the music of Der Freischütz on the band, young Jullien set about scoring it from a pianoforte copy."

"I should say the admiral had a chance of hearing a performance something like that which

Jean Jacques Rousseau tells us was his first attempt at scoring and conducting," interrupted the Sultan.

"And that the juvenile musician was nothing but the 'insolent maker of noise,'" said the Impresario. "I don't know about that," he continued; "if the effect of Jullien's score had been anything like that of Rousseau's, he would, I fancy, have been put in chains, or dismissed the service, which he certainly was not. According to these notes," said the manager, "it appears that after the war was over he returned to France, and played for six months on the piccolo in the band of one of the regiments of the line. He had a great desire to go to Paris and study composition at the Conservatoire, and for that purpose started on foot for Paris, and entered the Conservatoire under Cherubini and Halevy—he had to play in the orchestras of the Barrière to earn enough to keep him. His performances attracted the attention of the proprietor of the Jardin Turc, who made him conductor of that establishment. He there created an immense sensation by playing the Nightingale Valse on the piccolo. All Paris flocked to hear

him. He there formed the acquaintance of Rossini. One evening, after the performance of the overture of 'Guillaume Tell,' the composer came up and introduced himself, saying he was Rossini the composer, and wished to suggest some slight alteration in the 'reading' of the overture.

"The great maestro was so delighted with the readiness of the conductor to fall in with his suggestion, that they were ever afterwards friends, and Rossini obtained for him the direction of the Bals d'Opera. Jullien was at this time the idol of the Paris public, making about 4,000*l.* a year. He was, however, young and reckless, and spent his money faster than he earned it. When at the height of his popularity in Paris, he opened the celebrated Casino in the Chaussée d'Antin. The success of this undertaking was so great, that the managers of the theatres endeavoured to suppress it, and the police authorities were induced to order the room to be closed. This led Jullien to publish a programme, in which he turned the French Government into ridicule, and for this offence he

was condemned to imprisonment, and a heavy fine. To escape this punishment he fled to England, where he made his first appearance at Drury Lane Theatre in 1838. Eliason was then the manager of the theatre, and engaged Jullien to conduct the dance music. His success was so great that Eliason soon made him *conducteur en chef.*

"In 1841 he made his first provincial tour, and in 1842 opened the Lyceum for promenade concerts. At the end of that season, Jullien returned to Paris, being promised by Louis Philippe that if he surrendered himself he should be pardoned. He underwent a short imprisonment at St. Pélagie, with other political offenders, and was liberated.

"In the spring of 1843, he returned to London, and made a large sum of money by publishing his own polkas and valses. In November of 1843 he gave a second series of concerts at the English Opera. He then accepted a proposal to join Mr. Gye, who, for a short time, had been employed by him as manager in some concerts at Covent Garden. This partnership in concerts continued up to Jullien's departure for America in 1853.

"In 1847 Jullien opened Drury Lane as an English Opera, and introduced Sims Reeves to the London public. This undertaking was unfortunate, and the manager became bankrupt. On his examination, he was highly complimented by the Commissioner, who told him that he left the court without a stain on his character.

"In 1852 his opera 'Peter the Great' was produced at Covent Garden.

"In July, 1853, he left for America under engagement to his London publishers. The expenses of this expedition completely absorbed the receipts and 5,000*l.* besides. Instead of relying upon Jullien's name as the great attraction which it really was, a mistaken policy induced the managers to take out a number of instrumental performers, whose salaries and living cost more than the receipts could possibly cover. Jullien remained in America until June, 1854, and visited every town of importance in the United States. It was at his concerts that the English custom was introduced in America of rising while the national anthem, "Hail Columbia," was sung.

"On his return to England, he went to his château L'Abbaye d'Aynières, near Waterloo, in Belgium."

"Yes, I remember his assuring me," said Hatton, "that he had so cut the trees of a certain plantation on his Belgian estate, that when the wind was in the south they played the slow movement of Mendelssohn's Scotch symphony."

"That must have been shortly before his death," said the Impresario. "However, let us finish these notes. Jullien remained at his château," he continued reading, "until the concerts began at Drury Lane in the autumn of 1854. They were so successful that they were carried on at Covent Garden after Christmas.

"In 1856 the Surrey Gardens were opened by a company, a magnificent hall having been built for Jullien's promenade concerts. I was interested with Jullien in that undertaking, and had arranged to pay all expenses, vocalists, etc., for half the receipts, Jullien finding the band and his own services for the other half."

"Rather a one-sided division," remarked the Sultan.

"Rather so," continued the Impresario, "considering I included Grisi, Gassier, Alboni, and other 'stars' in my list of payments. The arrangement was for a fortnight. At the end of the first week, the band struck for arrears of salaries due to them, not by Jullien, but by the company that had failed. The musicians declared they would not perform unless I endorsed their engagements, and made myself liable for the whole debt. Their determination was formally made known to Jullien one Saturday afternoon in the Gardens, after the morning concert had taken place. I was absent. Jullien sent his secretary to my house to fetch me. In order to keep the band together until I arrived, and could make some arrangement, Jullien made them a speech, addressing them from a chair on which he stood, and from which he would have the first intimation of my approach. He spoke for some time, and I believe very nearly succeeded in inducing the band to do as he wished them without my intercession. In the excitement of speaking he knelt down and repeated a few words in French. He saw me enter the Gardens. As

I came near the little crowd of instrumentalists, Jullien jumped up from among them on to the chair, and pointing to me, said—'Gentlemen, my prayers have been heard; here is the man with the money.' The musicians hurried round me like a swarm of bees on a lump of sugar."

"And did you pay them?" asked the Sultan.

"No, I did not; but Jullien got the assistance of a military band then playing in the Gardens, and the concert that evening was duly performed, Jullien telling the audience that his Sepoys had revolted; and that had it not been for the gallantry of the British soldiers, he would have been sacrificed. It was during the time of the Indian Rebellion, and the effect of the speech was tremendous."

"In 1857 his cornet-à-pistons player, Kœnig, died insane at Paris. The loss of one with whom he had been so long associated had a serious effect on Jullien, and from this period his energies seemed to fail him; he was most anxious to return to France. His last concerts in London took place at the Lyceum in 1858. His last

appearance in public was at the Free-Trade Hall, Manchester, in the early part of February, 1859. After this he left England, broken in health and spirits. He went to Paris, where he was imprisoned for debt at Clichy. He was arrested as an Englishman, at the suit of an Englishman. This greatly increased his mental excitement, which had been for some time apparent. On being liberated, he arranged to give some concerts on a grand scale at the Cirque Impérial, in the Champs Elysées. The first was to have taken place on March 12, 1860, but it was found necessary to put him under restraint some three weeks before that time.

"He was sitting at the pianoforte one morning, when he suddenly rose with a knife in his hand, and, addressing a young lady who was on a visit in the house, told her he had an inspiration from Heaven to kill her. With wonderful presence of mind, she declared she was prepared to die, but asked him to grant her one favour before fulfilling his mission. 'What is it?' he replied; 'I have power to agree to what you may demand.' She begged that he would let her hear him play some

of his own compositions on the piccolo. He consented, and went into an adjoining room to fetch the instrument. She turned the key upon him and rang for assistance. He was taken to Dr. Pinet's Maison de Santé, known as La Folie St. James, where he died raving mad, on March 14, 1860."

"What a terrible end!" said the Sultan.

"Terrible indeed," replied the Impresario, "and for one who, before his illness, was so good and kind to every one about him. Jullien did a great deal for the cause of music and the musical profession, and deserved a better fate."

"I allow he did very much towards rendering classical music popular with the English public, but I do not see what he did for the musical profession," said the Sultan.

"If he increased the love of the art among those whose money supports the artist, it surely follows that he improved the condition of the latter."

"Well, in that sense, it is as you say," replied Hatton.

"Then again, Jullien, in common with every

other Impresario, was the direct means of distributing a very large sum of money among the profession, and he paid his instrumentalists, or had them paid, as I know to my cost, better than any conductor who ever had an orchestra under his command."

"I have heard that before," said Hatton. "Dear me," he continued, "your stories of Jullien have wiled away the time so pleasantly and quickly, here we are at Manchester."

The train had reached its destination, perhaps sooner than the Sultan had expected; but not before the patience of the rest of the party had been severely tried. They had understood very little of the conversation that had been going on, and, as is usual in such circumstances, found it very hard that anything interesting which they could not enjoy should be talked about in their presence.

CHAPTER XII.

It was an awful day in Manchester. The smoky canopy which always covers the commercial city was thicker than usual, having in fact turned itself into the densest fog; and a Manchester fog is such a fog as is not to be met with elsewhere. It is a heavier and more solid mixture of damp and fire-smoke than is ever seen in London. You go into it as you would into a mass of the blackest soap-suds, and seem to wallow about in it; it seizes you by the throat, saturates your hair, blinds you, chokes you, and makes you feel more uncomfortable than you ever did before. Its moister particles settle down upon the flagstones, covering them with a soupy sort of mud, worse to walk on than the most slippery ice. Gas-lamps glare at you through the fog with inflamed eyes; the tall warehouses loom through

the murky air like huge phantoms—you try in vain to trace their outlines—they seem to melt into illimitable chaos. The houses over the way are invisible, not because, like the Spanish fleet, they are out of sight, but because they are in the fog. All vehicles go at a foot pace, and the voices of the drivers shouting to each other as they slowly feel their way sound like echoes from the world of spirits. Boys go about with flaring torches, reeking with pitch and tar; they insist on showing you the way, and spoiling your clothes while doing so. The inhabitants of Manchester, as a rule, breathe an atmosphere similar in character to the Thames water at London Bridge—on foggy days their enviable position may be compared to that of eels swimming about in mud. The fog frightened the foreigners. Manchester was, in their opinion, *l'anticamera del diavolo—un pays d'enfer.*

"*Potztausend Donnerwetter!*" exclaimed the basso, as he put his head out of the carriage window, and tried to get a glimpse of the far-famed city.

Though the hotel at which we were to stay

was but a short distance from the station, we had some trouble in getting there.

The ladies were put into a carriage that had been sent to meet us: the rest followed in cabs. The two servants were left to look after the luggage, being cautioned against losing it in the fog. After a slow drive we at length reached the hotel, and were shown our apartments.

"You ordered the dinner, Sultan?" said the Impresario.

"Certainly, and that it was to be on table at half-past three," replied the commissary-general.

It was necessary that the artists should attend a band rehearsal of the concert. The rehearsal had been called for one o'clock, and it was now past that hour.

"But how is it possible to go out in this fog?" said one of the party; "could not our maestro rehearse for all of us?"

"What! you want me to sing and play the concert through, do you?" said Hatton.

"Hardly that; but I think you might manage to tell the conductor where the 'cuts' are made

in the different pieces, and all about the *tempi*," was the reply.

"Anything to oblige," said the courtly Sultan; "but some of you must come: we can do without the ladies."

The tenor tried hard to be included among the latter; but the Sultan declared he could not rehearse for him, so it ended in his going with the rest.

We went to the Gentleman's Concert Room, in which the evening concert was to take place. The band had already assembled, and we were impatiently expected.

"Where are the ladies?" asked the conductor.

"They beg to be excused coming out to rehearse in this weather, and asked me to represent them," replied the Sultan.

The conductor was not much pleased with the arrangement, but had to make the best of it. A rehearsal at any time is not very amusing, much as some people think to the contrary. When mistakes are frequent, and the flow of the music or dialogue is interrupted by constant repetitions; when the conductor's stick is heard rapping his

desk to denote dissatisfaction—bystanders find listening to the disjointed performance a weary trial of patience. Fanatical admirers of Gennaro may watch with intense interest his movements as he arranges with Lucrezia on which side she is to stand when singing to him, or settle whether he is to fall backwards or forwards in the last act; but their familiarity with such details will not add to the illusion of the stage performance. I once gratified the curiosity of a country friend, who was anxious to penetrate the mysteries of the rehearsal of a ballet at the Italian Opera in London. Mr. Green (really his appropriate name) was amazed at the active exercises of the graceful *coryphées* in their morning "*robes montantes.*" He gazed at them through his spectacles with an eagerness akin to rudeness, and only pardonable from the novelty of his position. We approached the principal *danseuse* —one of the most distinguished sylphides, being none other than Cerito. She was supporting herself against a side-scene—and, if I may be allowed to say it—was stretching her legs, working them up and down. I asked permis-

sion to introduce Mr. Green, who was close to me.

"*Charmée de faire votre connaissance,*" said the charming artiste, still holding on to the side-scene and continuing her gymnastics.

Mr. Green bowed, but said not a word. He was gaping with astonishment; the temptation to increase his surprise was too great for Cerito to resist—with incomparable grace she popped the point of her pretty little foot into Mr. Green's open mouth. It was done in an instant, and, I fancy, was a caution to my friend not to gape in future at a *ballerina.*

Of all rehearsals, those of Meyerbeer's operas, when attended by the illustrious composer, were —with respect be it said—the most tedious. No musician was ever so fastidious about the effect to be produced by his music. He would score some *morçeaux* in several different ways: the first he would write in blue ink, the second in red, the third in green. At the first rehearsal he would have all tried consecutively, and, placing himself in the audience part of the theatre, listen to the result, always seeking the opinion of some

one in whose judgment he had confidence, generally Madame Viardot, before deciding which scoring should be adopted. After each rehearsal, Meyerbeer used to go round to the different members of the orchestra to compliment them, or to make some suggestion on their respective performances. On the production of his "Camp of Silesia" in Berlin, he was desirous that a great effect should be made by the loud clashing of cymbals in a certain part of the opera. At the conclusion of the first rehearsal, Meyerbeer went as usual to the performers, congratulated some, and proposed various *nuances* to others.

Coming to the cymbals, he assured the player that nothing could be better than the precise way in which they had been sounded; but if he might make a request it would be that they should be "*un peu plus fort.*" He was assured that his suggestion should have every attention.

After the second rehearsal, however, the great maestro made the same remark, "*Tout était charmant; mais, si c'est possible, je le voudrais un peu plus fort.*"

At the third rehearsal the player was so anxious to gratify the wish of the composer that he not only made them sound "*un peu plus fort*," but he smashed the cymbals; and, the next clash being altogether inaudible, he held up the fragments in his hand to show, much to Meyerbeer's astonishment, what had happened.

Apropos of rehearsals, Meyerbeer related to me an interesting incident that occurred at some concerts given under his direction during the Queen's visit to Germany. We were dining in Paris at the Café Voisin in the Rue St. Honoré, one of the maestro's favourite dining haunts, when the conversation took place. Talking about the relative artistic proficiency of different singers, "When perfection of vocal facility has been attained by any two artists, it is very difficult," said Meyerbeer, "to judge between them." This was in answer to a question I had asked as to whom he considered the most accomplished vocalist of the day. "At one of the concerts I conducted during the progress of your Queen through Germany," he continued, "Lind and Viardot sang. Out of compliment to the con-

ductor they chose my duet, 'La Mère Grand,' to sing together. At the rehearsal nothing was said about a cadenza, and none was tried. I thought the ladies would arrange one among themselves. During the evening, I asked them what they intended doing, and they replied they had not yet determined. The moment arrived for the duet to be performed, and they had evidently settled nothing. We went into the orchestra, and the duet was sung with immense effect, being constantly interrupted by applause. At the pause for the cadenza I raised my *bâton*, and waited to hear what the fair vocalists would do. Viardot led off with a series of the most elaborate 'runs' and *fioriture* I ever listened to—her cadenza was a composition of itself. I was in some anxiety as to what Lind would follow with, when to my amazement every note that Viardot had sung was repeated, without a fault or the slightest hesitation. This, to my mind, was a most remarkable instance of the complete perfection of vocal facility which both of these singers have attained. I cannot say," concluded Meyerbeer, "who, in my opinion, is the greatest living vocalist." The

award, however, was evidently to one of the two ladies he had mentioned.

The Sultan having fulfilled his promise, and all the pieces having been tried, we returned to the hotel. Dinner was served, and certainly the commissary-general had done his duty; not that the bill of fare was anything extravagant, but the dishes were well chosen, and came in proper order, a most important feature in every *menu*. Turtle and venison may be delicious, but venison and turtle would not be eatable. There is a difference between *gourmands* and *gourmets* which few people understand. Those who are particular in what they eat are improperly classed among the former, although the tastes of an epicure are not formed without a long and careful study of that most difficult of the subjects that have interested all communities with any pretensions to refinement,—how to eat well.

We dined by gaslight. It was remarkable how little wine we consumed, and quite astonishing how much water the foreigners drank to digest, as they said, the maccaroni.

After dinner a card was brought to the Impre-

sario, who left the table to welcome a gentleman who had just entered the room.

"Ah, Mr. Peacock, how are you?" exclaimed the Impresario.

"Delighted indeed to see you," said Hatton to the stranger.

He was a short spare man with long iron-grey hair turned over his ears and allowed to grow so long as almost to reach his shoulders, eyes like an eagle's, prominent nose, a little whisker about his wan cheeks, closely shaven lip and chin, high forehead, and a pale complexion that gave him the appearance of an invalid, although he declared in a weak tone of voice that he was quite well. His mouth indicated great energy and decision of character, and he looked as he came into the room in his long coat tightly buttoned up to the throat like a man of mark and purpose.

"*Chi è?*" asked Sivori.

"Mr. Peacock, the art-critic of one of the most influential daily newspapers in the provinces," replied the Impresario. "Let me present you to our prima donna," he continued to Mr. Peacock.

The reply given to Sivori had been heard by

the lady, and she came forward to make Mr. Peacock's acquaintance. After the usual compliments on such occasions, the visitor was pressed to stay, but he assured us he could remain but a few minutes. He took a seat, and the few minutes he did remain passed too quickly away. In the course of conversation some remarks were made about descriptive poetry, and the Impresario, who was aware of Mr. Peacock's power as a poet—a power which, it appears, he for some unaccountable reason always conceals—challenged him as to the authorship of some lines he had read a short time previously. After some good-natured banter, Mr. Peacock acknowledged the lines were his.

"I should much like to hear them," said the Sultan.

"I will repeat some lines that will, perhaps, amuse you more than those to which you refer," said Mr. Peacock. "I had better explain to you," he continued, "that in certain parts of Ireland, runs the legend, the Phookah, or spirit of a wild horse, lies in wait for the weary traveller, and dashes with him to destruction."

This short explanation led to one of the most amusing recitations I ever heard. Mr. Peacock began:—

"The moon is up, the watch-dog barks,
The stars are shooting forth like sparks;
The mists are hovering o'er the plain,
Like spirits returned to earth again.
And Larry is wending his lonely way
Across the moor, for morning grey
Must see him tap at the cabin door
Of the only girl his heart could lure.

"He is breathing hard—he is hurrying on,
For a dark cloud comes, and the moon is gone;
But still a long way off he sees
A glimmering light between the trees.
'By the son of my mother, I wish I was there,
With the small dhrops of whiskey I've got to spare,
I'd dhrink to my darlin in spite of the weather,
The want of the moon or the fairies together.'

"His breath had scarce whispered his heart's desire,
When he found himself close by that lonely fire.
He staggered! and stared, for beside it there lay
A withered old woman, withered and grey.
She stretched her pale hand and muttering cried,
'Larry! you'll want a good horse to ride.'

"Then forth like a shadowy cloud of night,
A wild horse sprang with its trappings bright,
And Larry's head whizzed, for he knew mighty well,
'Twas the Phookah that dashes o'er rock and dell.
'Darlin mother,' cries he, 'I'm in no sort of haste,
Nor wish to be mountin' that beautiful baste;
Besides, I can't ride, for my father so cruel,
Made me into a tailor's apprentice, my jewel.'

" 'Mount, mount!' she cried, and then with a smack
He found himself quick on the Phookah's back.
Away, away! full swift as the wind,
He's hurrying on, while close behind
He hears the old woman's muttering curse,
As she lashes along the struggling horse;
'I wish,' cries Larry, 'the lady would stop
If it was but to moisten my clay with a dhrop.'

" Away, away! o'er mountain steep,
And thro' the bog and the river deep;
His blood runs cold—his brain spins round,
When o'er a mighty rock with a bound;
From crag to crag—he's crushed!—he's dead!
But he wakes from sleep, and finds he's in bed;
For the night before, with the landlady's daughter,
He had taken *one drop too much whiskey-and-water.*"

The tone of voice, expression of face, the action with which Mr. Peacock spoke, impressed every one in the room. With his declamatory powers, he worked his audience up to a pitch of intense excitement. The suddenness of the *dénoûment*, accompanied by a wicked twinkle of the reciter's eye, was irresistible. The prima donna, who understood but little of the words of the ballad, was delighted; the tenor took a lesson in English declamation from the eagle-eyed orator; the basso, over whom a strange change had come, was wonderfully interested in the tale.

The Italians declared it was a treat to watch the energetic gestures, "instinct with spirit," of the poet.

Mr. Peacock left us but too soon. When he was gone the Impresario told us that he was one of the most active workers in Manchester in the cause of social reform through the medium of the sister arts, but especially music.

The time came for the party to prepare for the concert, which accordingly they did. Unfortunately for the ladies, the gallant Sultan could not save them the necessity of going out into the fog by singing for them, so they had to brave the elements and go with the rest. The weather had cleared a little, and it was now just possible to see as far as the other side of the way.

The society by which the concert was given is known as the Gentleman's Concert Society—a most exclusive body, to which all the fashionable world of Manchester belongs. It is managed by a committee of merchant princes, and the performances are of the very first character.

The concert in this instance was brilliantly attended, the fog notwithstanding, which, how-

ever, asserted its power by getting down the throats of the audience, and bringing out a chorus of coughs not to be found in the score of any of the pieces announced in the programme.

Our tourists were received with all honour by the committee of management of the society. One merchant prince, patting Sivori on the back, told him in a loud, pleasant voice he had grown no bigger, on which Sivori shook his head, and taking his "child" from its couch of velvet, showed it to the committee man, who, a very good *conoscente* himself, handled it in a duly scientific manner, and highly praised it. To the ladies the committee were of course particularly attentive. Tea and coffee had been prepared, and when these were removed, a sumptuous dessert was displayed on a side-table.

It was an agreeable evening too for the Impresario, for he had nothing to think of as to whether the receipts were large or small. His secretary acknowledged a cheque from the secretary of the Society, and the business part of the evening was settled. The Impresario took an opportunity of assuring me he wished every

evening of the tour might have as satisfactory an ending, and I believed him.

I have said, a little way back, that a change was to be noticed in the manner of the basso. Since we left Birmingham this change had been remarked by many of the party. When we first met him, he was silent and morose. At breakfast at Birmingham he would hardly speak to any one. Now he had become marked in his attentions to the contralto's mamma, and a great deal more so in his attentions to the contralto herself. In the duet "*La ci darem*" with the young lady this evening, he was so strongly affected as to sing villanously out of tune, and to what is technically termed "quack" on the G natural, when trying to give expression to his sentiments in the quick movement of the popular duet—at least so he accounted for the phenomena aforesaid when he confidently told the Impresario he had fallen in love with the contralto.

"*I loave haer!*" he assured the manager, who advised him to think better of it.

"*È innamorato,*" said Bottesini, when the change that had come over the basso was being

discussed after the interesting Teuton had left us for the night.

His courtship was not a happy one, neither was it long. A slight mistake that he made the next day put an end to it for ever.

We were on the road to Bradford from Manchester. The love-stricken basso had been glaring at the object of his affections all the morning, and had, it appeared, resolved to declare himself forthwith—thereby somewhat belying the phlegmatic nature of his countrymen in such matters. We were not quite so gay and talkative as the day before. As far as amusement was concerned, Jacko and Bibi had it all their own way. The rest of the party were more or less pensive. Whether the unhappy state of the basso's mind influenced us or not, I am unable to decide.

After we had been an hour or so on the road, we came to an unusually long tunnel. The basso was sitting opposite his flame, next to whom was the tenor. During our transit through the tunnel—we had no lamp in the carriage—the fatal mistake which blasted the basso's hopes of happiness occurred. He had,

it seems, determined in his own mind to seize the opportunity of darkness to make known the state of his heart to the contralto. He did so, and grasped what he supposed to be her hand. As the train suddenly emerged into daylight, what was his horror and confusion to find that he had laid hold of the tenor's paw instead, and was smothering it with kisses, in which act we all discovered him. From that time forth he wrapped himself in his furs, where he sought consolation in solitude and isolation from his companions. It was a wicked joke on the part of the tenor, and one for which the basso never forgave him.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHAPTER thirteen! Ominous period of my story!—a chapter which, according to the doctrine of some of my travelling companions, ought to be devoted to trouble and misfortune. Prejudice against the unhappy number thirteen pervades the whole party. The basso firmly believes it has something, if not a great deal, to do with the accident which befel him yesterday. Even those who treat such matters with contempt become unwillingly impressed with a vague notion of its evil influence.

They ridicule the objection of the prima donna to sit down thirteen at table, or to occupy room No. 13, but listen attentively to the stories she relates in support of her theory, and come to the conclusion that, though the prejudice is absurd, yet it is as well to be on the safe side, and avoid as much as possible the supposed unlucky number.

It is thus with all superstitions. They originate in the minds of the credulous, and, by association, obtain recognition by even the most learned and the least prejudiced of men. An intelligent writer on the subject says—"Of things palpably fabulous in our eyes, it is not enough to say that they could not possibly be believed by this or that man of great intellectual endowments."

To what absurd conclusions would not this principle carry us? We should be obliged by it to hold that no instructed man ever believed in witchcraft, in judicial astrology, or the philosopher's stone! If the steady mind of the great discoverer of America could be seduced by the belief that he had there found the site of the terrestrial paradise; and if Raleigh could seriously discuss the question, as he does in his "History of the World," whether that site ought not to be rather sought near the orb of the moon, he might well be allowed also to believe in El Dorado without prejudice either to his sincerity or mental sanity.

Was it half as extraordinary that Raleigh should in his day, believe in the fables in question, as it

was that Dr. Johnson should, in his, believe in the power of second sight, although he was not deceived by the celebrated Cock Lane Ghost? It has been justly observed by this vigorous thinker (N.B., Dr. Johnson, *not* the Ghost!), that "it is the greatest failing of a strong imagination to catch greedily at wonders." In fact, men of the strongest minds in ancient and modern times have evinced a tendency to superstitious belief. Tully says, of the disciples of Pythagoras, —"Pythagorei non solum voces deorum observârunt sed etiam hominum quæ vocant omina;" and the "symbols" of the Samian philosopher, recited by Jamblichus, inculcate the ominous observance of the things to which they relate. For the pleasure of those who take delight in recalling their school-lore, I will here repeat them :—

"Adore the sound of the whispering wind.

"Stir not the fire with a sword.

"Turn aside from an edged tool.

"Pass not over a balance.

"Setting out on a journey turn not back, for the Furies will return with you.

"Breed nothing that has crooked talons.

"Receive not a swallow into your house.

"Look not in a mirror by the light of a candle.

"At a sacrifice pare not your nails.
"Eat not the heart or the brain.
"Taste not that which hath fallen from table.
"Break not bread.
"Sleep not at noon.
"When it thunders, touch the earth.
"Pluck not a crown.
"Roast not that which hath been boiled.
"Sail not on the ground.
"Plant not a palm.
"Breed a cock, but do not sacrifice it, for it is sacred to the sun and the moon.
"Plant mallows in the garden, but eat them not."

According to these precepts, Pythagoras was unquestionably superstitious. The old gentleman might have had some unpleasant experience of the indigestible nature of beans and mallows, to which the advice relating to them particularly may be attributed; but, with that exception, the symbols imply a faith in external signs, foretelling happiness or misfortune, similar to the prejudice of our prima donna against No. 13, and the belief in lucky and unlucky omens held by many at the present day.

Prejudice or superstition, seems, indeed, to be an almost inseparable property of human nature. With some people it is as strong a feeling as religion itself. To sneer and laugh at it is as

inconsiderate as to turn religious faith into ridicule.

It may at certain times exist in a greater or a less degree; but it can never be said to have entirely lost its influence, or to have been altogether set aside. The impressions of our youth are the deepest and most indelible. If, in our younger days, we have been taught to associate certain events with signs and tokens, to identify the appearance of certain objects as preceding happiness or misfortune, these impressions will probably, in spite of all our reasoning and what is called common sense, have their influence in after life, and impart a taint of superstition to the mind of the most educated.

It is interesting to notice the different opinions of various authors on the subject. Southey, somewhere in his "Doctor," observes: "There is no superstition, however harmless it may appear and may indeed long continue to be, but has in it some latent evil." He proceeds to argue the point and prove the truth of his assertion, but certainly not very successfully. The cynical De Quincey, in that peculiar style

which throws such doubt upon the sincerity of what he writes, commences a masterly essay upon modern superstition thus :—

"It is said that the age of the miraculous and supernatural is past. I deny that it is so, in any sense which implies this age to differ from all other generations of man except one. It is neither past, nor ought we to wish it past. Superstition is no vice, absolute and unconditional in the constitution of man. It is, or it is not, a vice according to the particular law of its development. Superstition indeed, in the sense of sympathy with the invisible, is the great test of man's grandeur, as an earthly combining with a celestial. In superstition lies the possibility of religion, and hence the obstinate interfusion of the two ideas in the Roman word *religio*. And though superstition is often injurious, degrading, demoralising, it is so, not as a form of corruption or degradation, but as a form of non-development. Superstition will finally pass into pure forms of religion as man advances. It would be matter of lamentation to hear that superstition had at all decayed until man

had made corresponding steps in the purification and development of his intellect as applicable to religious faith."

It is hard to say whether De Quincey has any feeling in favour of superstition, or whether—which is more likely the case, while apparently giving it undue importance—he is sneering at those who are really credulous.

Sir Walter Scott, in his "Demonology and Witchcraft," which, physiologically speaking, is a history of the human race (as any work on the subject necessarily should be), remarks that "the tendency to belief in supernatural agencies is natural, and indeed seems connected with and deduced from the invaluable conviction of the certainty of a future state;" an observation somewhat at variance with the quotation from Southey which I have given above.

Volumes might be written about the superstitions of men and women generally thought to be superior to any such prejudices.

They may reason with La Place, who, in his "Essai sur les Probabilités," says:—"Any case, however incredible, if it be a recurrent case is as

much entitled to a fair valuation under the laws of induction as if it had been more probable beforehand;" on which hypothesis he argues that a run of success on "heads or tails" is entitled to grave consideration. Most people dismiss such a case as pure accident; but La Place insists on its being duly valued as a fact, however unaccountable as an effect. But superstitious people seldom reason at all; their faith is, nevertheless, strong, and they are not to be laughed out of their superstitions by those who think themselves too strong-minded to entertain such absurd notions, but who, nevertheless, have their prejudices in common with those they turn into ridicule. Few men can say with truth they are quite free from superstitious feeling of some degree. Even the stern old Christian, Dr. Doddridge, was, as Acton tells us in his Memoir, a believer in sortilege, and allowed it to influence him in changing his abode from Harborough to Northampton. And so was Rousseau, in a still more childish manner, as can be seen in the "Confessions," Part I., Book VI., where he relates how he learned his destiny in a future state by throwing a stone against a tree.

The stone hit the tree, and Rousseau was to be saved; had it missed, his fate would have been otherwise. The First Napoleon foresaw the fate of his Italian possessions in the destruction of the Nile boat *L'Italie* in 1799, and was inconsolable. Argument was used in vain to remove the sinister impression. "My presentiments never deceive me," he said; "you will see that all is ruined. I am convinced that Italy, my conquest, is lost to France." The news of the disasters of Massena and others had not then reached him. Subsequent intelligence proved the omen correct.

Owing to superstitious belief in a supposed spiritual communication, the title of "Valois" has been removed from the escutcheon of the House of Orleans, and that of Chartres substituted for it. The fate of Charles I. is said to have been frequently foreshadowed by omens, and by omens of unmistakable significance; as, for instance, the white velvet robes he was forced to wear at his coronation—the colour being that in which victims are arrayed.

Blennerhasset, in his "English History," says

the crown of James II., "being too little for the king's head, was often in a tottering condition and like to fall off," which some people eagerly point at as indicating the misfortunes of that reign. Marie Antoinette shuddered at the evil omens which attended her reception in Paris. And, to go farther back, Henri IV. of France implicitly believed in the mysterious warnings of his fate, which he met with fortitude and resignation, as being immutable and beyond all human power to avert.

The prejudice against a certain number is a remarkable instance of superstitious fear, notwithstanding all the convincing proofs that reason brings to bear to show the absurdity of such an impression. Quételet, referring to this popular error, remarks:—"If the probability be required that out of thirteen persons, one of them at least shall die within a year, it will be found that the chances are about one to one that one death will occur. This calculation, by means of a false interpretation, has given rise to the prejudices, no less ridiculous, that the danger will be avoided by inviting a greater number of guests, which can only

have the effect of augmenting the probability of the event so much apprehended."

It is difficult to trace the beginning of this antipathy to thirteen, and to learn what combination of circumstances has given this particular number such an unenviable reputation. Some assert that it dates from the Lord's Supper, as the prejudice respecting Friday is said to be attributable to the Crucifixion having taken place on that day of the week. It is at any rate held in abhorrence by the credulous of all countries. In this age of boasted enlightenment, such a subject may to many appear unworthy of discussion.

Nevertheless, the practice of making ordinary events ominous of good or bad fortune is, perhaps, as prevalent in this country at the present day as it was at any time in the history of the world. Do not spiritualists flourish and grow rich by trading on the foolish credulity of the present generation? And what worse or more pernicious form of superstition can possibly exist than belief in spiritual manifestations, tending, as it does, to ruin the mental and bodily health of the young members of society who are not strong enough

to withstand the specious arguments of its crafty professors!

Popular superstition is certainly in no degree diminished in the agricultural districts, and is there the more apparent, no effort being made to conceal it.

Horse-shoes picked up in the high road are still carefully preserved by the lucky finder, who waits with confidence for the great good fortune which has been thus foretold him. A magpie is still looked upon as "the hateful messenger of heavy things, of death and dolour-telling"—in short, none of the lucky or unlucky objects seem to have lost their magic power, but are as much respected as in days of yore. It is not so very long ago that the sale of Moore's "Astrological Prophesying Almanac" amounted to 480,000. This extraordinary circulation, as is well known, decreased one-half when the predictions were omitted, but rose again as soon as they were restored. If any other proof were wanting, surely this indicates a prevalence of belief in signs and tokens among the people of this kingdom.

Many words which still do us good service take

their origin from some superstition. The word "sinister" will furnish us with an example—originally strictly applying to the left hand, as in Ovid's "*Corvus ad Sinistram*"—now, the sense of the word is confined to what is indicative of evil. Again—"disaster" etymologically signifies "with the stars apart," and is evidently derived from an astrological superstition, but is now used in the general sense of calamity.

Many general terms are, in fact, to be traced to the same source. A man's fortunes are still said to be in the *ascendant*. One point of faith with astrologers was that a man's disposition partook of the character of the planet under which he was born; thus many very useful words are derived from the names of the planets, such as *jovial*, *mercurial*, *saturnine*, and others, all traceable to a superstitious origin. Whatever may be thought of their derivation, it must be allowed that these are serviceable words. *Augur* and *auspice* coming from *avis* and *garrire; avis* and *specere; panic* from the name of the mythological deity Pan, are other instances that will occur to the mind of those who take an interest in such matters. Words still

remain, although fairies and witches may have gone out of fashion; but less poetical and imaginative objects are nevertheless still supposed to be identified with that mysterious attribute, generally called "luck," and are courted or avoided as much as ever. Of these, No. 13 has retained all its original reputation, and by its supposed evil influence has spoiled more good dinners and destroyed the peace of mind of more old maids who raise their skinny hands to avert the omen, than any of its sinister companions. But I must leave the ladies just mentioned to account for the power of its spell, while I continue to relate the doings of my fellow-tourists, who have been shamefully neglected in the present chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

We left the tourists, before the last portentous chapter interrupted the progress of their travels, on the road between Manchester and Bradford, or, more strictly speaking, Leeds; for, owing to the want of hotel accommodation at the former town, they pitched their tent at the Scarborough Arms, in the latter, and went to the concert at Bradford after dinner, returning to Leeds to supper and to sleep. The basso's mistake in the tunnel had effectually broken the ice which had hitherto surrounded him. Owing either to his silence or his furs, he had been treated with a certain reserve, and looked upon as a deeply thinking man: but the one fatal error had banished all restraint, and the susceptible German was henceforth a standing joke with all of us.

We arrived at Leeds in time for dinner at the

usual hour, and found that our caterer had faithfully discharged his duty.

On being shown his room, the basso discovered that a blank piece of paper had been placed over the number on the door. He came to the Impresario and asked impatiently what it meant.

The mystery was explained by the servant of the manager saying that the No. was 13, which he thought it was better to conceal. The evil influence, however, worked its spell, for the bed in which the basso had to sleep was, by some occult agency, turned into an "apple pie," so cleverly contrived as to almost defy unmaking.

The ladies of the party must have got information of what had been done (it was believed by some they did it themselves), for they waited up that night until the basso left the supper-table, and was in his room about half an hour, when they assembled with cautious steps outside his door to hear the result of the conspiracy. We all accompanied them. The lights had been extinguished, and the passage was quite dark. We waited some time in breathless attention, and at last heard sounds that proved

beyond a doubt we had not waited in vain. The basso at last was getting into bed, and was evidently puzzled.

"'*Na, heisst das ein Bett,*" we heard him growl. He was trying to put his feet down,—a matter of some difficulty in an "apple pie." At length he got impatient, and struggled with the clothes; then furious, and jumped out of bed, or more correctly off the bed, exclaiming, "*Verdammtes Zeug.*" From what we could hear he tried to arrange matters by removing the sheets and blankets, which, for some reason or other, he could not manage to do; he then rang the bell furiously, whereupon we all retired, and left him to the care of the servants for that night. Not a word was said the next morning, and I believe our victim left Leeds with the conviction that beds were always made in that town in the uncomfortable fashion he had experienced.

The concert at Bradford was very successful, and St. George's Hall crowded to the ceiling. All our party were well received, but especially the Sultan, whose music is immensely popular in Yorkshire. His admirable part-songs are well

known to the Yorkshire singing-classes, as they are, indeed, to all musical societies throughout England. When Hatton appeared on the platform, he was greeted with hearty enthusiasm as an old favourite. The tenor was well pleased with the reception of the ballad. It had not been sung in Manchester, and this was its second appearance. There was no longer any doubt of its bringing sixpences innumerable to the lucky owner. A song by Schubert, Mozart, or Beethoven would, perhaps, have sounded better, but would certainly not have filled the tenor's pockets half so quickly.

We had hard work to catch the train for Leeds after the concert.

The conductor would not let us hurry through the programme, much as we wished to do so. To make matters worse, the audience insisted upon encoring the last piece but one, "Il Segreto." This was tantalising in the extreme, however flattering to the contralto, and nearly lost us the train, which, however, we caught at last. It was a cold, dreary ride to Leeds, made still more so by the contrast of the brilliantly-

lighted hall with the dark carriage, and the comfortless appearance of the railway station at midnight.

A pleasant supper at the Scarborough Arms made some amends for our late travelling.

"The last time I was in this part of the world," said the Impresario at supper, "was with Grisi and Mario. We were a large party, on our road to the north, where we were to give operas in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

"Was not Mario laid up here?" asked the prima donna.

"It was in this hotel he heard of the death of his mother, and he remained here for some days in great grief," replied the manager. "I never knew Mario to be ill for any time on a tour, often as he has been with me."

"I was going to say," he continued, "the last time I was in Yorkshire I encountered a difficulty that appeared to be insurmountable."

"And what was that?" asked the Sultan, who, having finished his supper, was sitting with his hands before him, the incarnation of supreme contentment.

"I had a party of about twenty foreigners with me," continued the Impresario. "It was on a Sunday in November. We had left Liverpool in the afternoon, and arranged to stay the night at Normanton, where there used to be a first-rate hotel adjoining the station."

"I know it," said Hatton.

"You *knew* it," replied the manager, "but will know it no more, for it is now closed; at least, I found it so to my cost on the occasion I speak of. Mr. Radley, of the Adelphi, had advised me to break the journey by sleeping there, and had written on the Saturday to the manager of the hotel to secure rooms. It was ten o'clock when we arrived at Normanton. On inquiring of the porters the way to the hotel, fancy my surprise on being told that it had been shut up during the previous week."

"But there was another near at hand?" said the contralto.

"Not one. Normanton is nothing more than a junction railway station," continued the Impresario. "I asked the porters what was to be done. They did not know, but continued putting out the

lamps and shutting up the station for the night. There was I, with twenty hungry foreigners at my heels in the wilds of Yorkshire on a Sunday night, without the slightest idea what to do with them."

"Pleasant position," remarked the Sultan.

"It was truly. I tried the waiting-rooms, thinking to get into them, but they were all locked up; the refreshment people had gone away with the hotel-keeper. After wandering about in despair for nearly half an hour, I heard the whistle of a steam-engine. I rushed in the direction whence it came, and found a goods train just starting. I shouted to the driver to stop, which, marvellous to say, he did. On asking where he was going, he said to Wakefield. The ticket-clerk, who up to this time had been invisible in his office, came and wanted to know why I delayed the train. 'To get to Wakefield by it.' 'You can't travel by a goods train,' he replied. 'And what is the next train out of Normanton?' I asked. 'Four o'clock,' was the reply. On hearing this, I offered him any fares or anything, to be allowed to get on to the goods train; and it ended, I must say, to the ticket clerk's

honour, without any extra charge, in our being conveyed to Wakefield as so many bales of cotton."

"What an escape!" said the contralto.

"Yes! fancy the Diva sleeping on the cold benches of a railway station, and suffering the pangs of hunger in that delightful position! Had it not been for the goods train, there would have been nothing else for her to do."

"Did you find anything to eat at Wakefield?" asked the contralto's mamma.

"Yes," replied the Impresario, "we were very hospitably received at two hotels, one not being large enough for our party."

"I think it is now time," said the prima donna, who was looking forward to the "apple pie" mystery with mischievous delight.

On being thus reminded of their intentions respecting the basso, who had left the supper-table at the commencement of the Impresario's story, we repaired on tip-toe to the corridor in which the basso's room was situated, and indulged ourselves as I have already described.

The next concert was announced at Newcastle,

and we had to get up earlier than ever in the morning, when, strange to say, we were fresher than usual, notwithstanding the long journey and late hours of the day before. The basso had somehow, I think, put us all into good humour, and given us something to laugh about. So far his fatal mistake had a beneficial effect. Of course when we came to a tunnel there were several hands offered him, but he was not to be deceived twice; nor did he attempt to renew his courtship.

"I have had a letter this morning," said the Impresario to Hatton, who was sitting opposite to him in the carriage, "from a friend in Edinburgh, who is anxious that you should hear his daughter play."

"Does she play well?" asked Hatton.

"Her father says so," replied the manager. "He believes there's no pianiste equal to her."

"I shall be delighted to listen to her," said the Sultan, graciously.

The Impresario's friend held the same exalted notion of his daughter's playing as the amateur musical attainments of an offspring generally

inspire. There is no accomplishment which is so frequently exaggerated when spoken of as music. The slightest indication of musical taste on the part of a child is deemed a wonder. A boy who can hum a melody, or a girl who can pick out a tune on the pianoforte, is looked upon as a prodigy. Any one who can sing or play, no matter how, is talked of as being a fine musician,—little thought being given to the true meaning of that term; and how few among musicians themselves really deserve the appellation. Although in this country we can boast of very first-rate musical amateurs,—amateurs who, in some instances, can put to shame many professors of the art,—it must be acknowledged we often listen complacently to the very worst; those misguided individuals who are permitted by good-natured hosts to torture our ears at an evening party.

Were the same amount of proficiency, or rather deficiency, displayed in the art of painting as there often is in music, the productions of the amateur would meet with their due reward. And yet music is as much an art as painting; and those who practise either in open defiance of just

principles, should be judged as critically in the one case as in the other.

The young lady you heard last night very probably sang out of tune, or mumbled her words so as to prevent the possibility of your knowing in what language she sang, and yet you applauded her.

Had she painted a sketch as badly as she sang, daubing the trees,—all the figures out of drawing (some perhaps with four arms, which would not be half so ridiculous as what she did in music), you would have concluded it was an outrage upon common sense to call it painting; and yet the one art is not a whit less difficult than the other, and if approached at all, should be practised conscientiously, and not made a subject for ridicule.

Then, again, the slightest pretension to musical talent—the smallest claim to a voice—is sufficient to induce people to believe that there is an infallible means of making money at command. It is astonishing how some will be misled in this particular; not, necessarily those who are supposed to possess the magic gift, but, still

more strange to say, their friends and relatives. Their wish, in almost every instance, is father to the thought, although they may refuse to acknowledge it.

They have persuaded themselves, and try to persuade you, that the talent is so apparent it would really be a sin to neglect it; their view of cultivating the power being that the public should pay for it, and great is their surprise when experience proves that the public refuse to do so.

It is a popular error,—one, let us hope, which is daily dying away,—that distinction in the musical profession is easily attained, and depends alone on natural gifts.

There never was a greater fallacy, as they who have embarked on the troubled sea of a public career well know.

Genius is undeniably a grand advantage; but genius, to ensure permanent results, must go through a course of hard training.

Musical talent is, I believe, one of the commonest attributes of human nature. Few men are born without music in their soul, and those

who are can only be pitied. But musical genius is one of the very rarest gifts; and this is the only way to account for there being so few really great musicians, compared with the many distinguished professors of the sister arts.

CHAPTER XV.

THE concert at Newcastle was given in the theatre, where a more motley audience had assembled than we had hitherto met with. The dress-circle and private boxes were filled by the local rank and fashion, while the pit and galleries were crowded by unusually noisy occupants.

The double bass afforded great delight, and Sivori's performance on the single string excited as much astonishment as ever. The Impresario shook hands warmly with the lessee of the theatre as they peeped through the curtain and saw the crowded house,—always a pleasant and heart-moving spectacle to a manager. Our Impresario at supper was in unusually good spirits. He gave us an account of an evening he had passed at Rossini's, in Paris, just before the tour commenced.

"When in Paris," he said, "for a few days

last week, I received an invitation from Rossini to attend his Saturday evening reception, a musical *levée*; at which all artists and professors of distinction assemble to pay their respects to the illustrious musician. Rossini lives, as you all know, on the Boulevard, at the corner of the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. On this occasion his court was attended by a galaxy of brilliant women, whose wit and conversation were more sparkling than the diamonds of any duchess in St. Germain; and a host of chevaliers, from whose button-holes dangled the gaudy decorations of every potentate in Europe. The hour of reception was nine o'clock, as usual—the amusement of the evening, music; no tea or coffee, no ices were allowed; the entertainment was purely intellectual, practically musical. And the tea and coffee were not missed; the music and *bons mots* of the amiable host afforded far greater enjoyment than the most refreshing ice. The three principal *salons* were thrown open to the guests. As I entered the first room and tried to make my way through the crowd which blocked up the entrance to the music-hall, peering over the shoulders of the

visitors, I saw Rossini seated at the pianoforte, accompanying the sisters Marchisio in a duet he had composed for his two *protégées*.

"Wonderful vocalists, those two sisters are, I am told," interrupted the Sultan.

"They are so," continued the Impresario, "and so Rossini thinks. In a brown shooting-jacket of the loosest fit imaginable, the sleeves almost covering the tips of the fingers, a very bad wig, nearly of the same colour as the coat, the figure at the pianoforte might at first sight have been taken for that of an old country gentleman retired from public life, and fattening to any extent upon the rich produce of his goodly acres. But wait awhile! The duet has but just begun. Let the accompanyist warm up. His indolence leaves him; he sits erect, and becomes excited. See how the loose sleeves flap about; look at the drops of perspiration on his forehead; observe the fire and brilliancy of his eye, as he turns to each of the singers, urging them to a greater effort in some crescendo passage or cadenza. Yes, there's genius in that figure at the pianoforte, now no longer bucolic in its appearance,

but easily identified as the inspired Rossini. The duet finished amid the most enthusiastic applause of the assembled guests—applause heartier and louder than is usual at an evening party. *Bravo Maestro! Bravo da vero!* Everybody crowded round the host, as he left the pianoforte to go to his own particular chair in the adjoining room. There was a pause in the music. The courtiers busied themselves with congratulating the two sisters, and through them saying a word of flattery to the composer, who every now and then convulsed the room with laughter by some witty remark, which would be carefully noted in the pocket-book of a *soi-disant* wit, to be the next day retailed as his own.

"After a short interval, Badiali and Solieri sang the duet '*All'idea*,' from 'Il Barbiere;' then Badiali volunteered the bass song in the 'Stabat;' after which a very clever amateur, whose name was, I think, Sampieri, joined Solieri in the 'Elisire' duet, and nearly eclipsed the tenor by his remarkable vocal skill and effective declamation. Seated next Rossini was an elderly lady, slim in figure, and somewhat wrinkled in feature. She

wore what is called a *robe montante*, and evidently was averse to crinoline. She was familiarly addressed by some as Marietta. 'Who is that vivacious matron to whom everybody pays so much attention?'

"'That,' said my friend, 'is Madame Taglioni.'

"'Not *the* Taglioni—the celebrated Sylphide?'

"'Yes, the same.'

"I looked again, and fancied I could just trace a resemblance in the elderly lady in the black silk dress to that portrait of a *danseuse* standing in an impossible position on one leg, which hangs in Mitchell's shop in Bond Street, covered with the dust of ages. It was a difficult task, the portrait having a *robe montante* the very reverse of that which the lady wore who was before me. Another celebrity of a time gone by was also present—Carafa, the composer of 'La Prigione d'Edinburgo,' 'Le Valet de Chambre,' and a hundred other operas now forgotten, the delight of a former generation. The old master is far from being in the same excellent preservation as his comrade, Rossini; but he nevertheless appeared to enjoy himself, and to carry his age remarkably

lightly. Rossini having listened attentively to the songs and duets mentioned, sent his *cara sposa*, one of the most active housewives I ever met with, to request the Marchisios to sing again. They complied, and he led them to the pianoforte, introducing them to various visitors as they went along, in the most eulogistic terms. This time he did not accompany, but stood by and encouraged the young artists with many a 'bravo' and smile of approbation. Eleven o'clock was now drawing near; and at that hour the reception always terminates. The last performance of the evening was by M. Nadaud, who sang some wonderfully lengthy French songs, with a sweet voice and great expression. Then every one prepared to go. Rossini had a kind good-night for all. In passing through the ante-room, he showed me Dantan's two caricature statuettes of himself and Meyerbeer, in which he is represented sitting in a dish of maccaroni hugging a lyre, and Meyerbeer as writing for dear life half a dozen operas at once. Rossini seemed to enjoy the joke, and to chuckle at his own idleness compared with the constant activity of Meyerbeer."

The Impresario's account of Rossini at home was listened to by most of us with interest. The Italians having often "assisted" at the receptions of the great maestro, and not being able to follow the narrative very easily, had taken to dominoes and chess before it was half finished.

The *soirée* of which the Impresario spoke, was one given some five or six years ago, before Meyerbeer's death. The receptions at the corner of the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin are still continued during the winter season, and are frequented by all the wit and talent of Paris. The last time I saw Rossini was in the Rue de la Paix. He was searching for a hosier's shop, where he said the best English woollen socks were sold. We looked about, and at last found the shop where the maestro laid in his winter store of *chaussettes*, and was received with much bowing and scraping by the hosier. Rossini has aged very much lately —looks thinner, and is obliged to be more careful of his health than heretofore. He is still, however, full of life, and as interested in all that goes on in the musical world as ever. He receives young and old with the same cordiality, encou-

raging the former to constant study, and chatting energetically about bygone times with the latter.

"Talking of Taglioni," said one of the supper party, "do you remember that story Veron tells of the celebrated *danseuse?*"

"No, I cannot say I do," replied the Impresario; "what is it?"

"When Veron was Manager of the Opera in Paris, Taglioni was under engagement to him. She fell ill, and declared she was quite unable to dance; her knee, she said, gave her the most exquisite pain whenever she tried to bend it. Her husband consulted all the doctors in Paris. There was no bruise — no external appearance of any injury whatever, and yet the talented artiste was wholly unable to appear in public. It ended in her having to cancel her agreement with the manager. Some four or five years after, Veron says he happened to pay a visit in St. Petersburg to Taglioni, and found a handsome boy of about four or five years old running about the room.

"'*Pardon, madame,*' said Veron, '*mais à qui cet enfant?*'

" ' *Monsieur*,' replied the lady, ' *c'est mon mal de genou.*' "

" Not a bad story," said the Sultan.

" *Se non è vero, è ben trovato*," remarked one of the Italians.

" *Se non è vero, è un scandalo*," said the Impresario.

" Whichever it may be, the story is better related than I have told it in Veron's Mémoires," replied the speaker.

The last two concerts of the first week of the tour were announced—Friday evening at Glasgow; Saturday morning at Edinburgh. They were both well attended, and brought the first week to a happy termination, much to the satisfaction of the Impresario. The Sultan kept his promise as regards the ambitious pianiste; but the result of the performance did not transpire. On the Saturday afternoon the party had to hurry off to Greenock, where, according to the plan of the tour, they were to embark on board the steamer for Belfast. The basso on the road to Greenock experienced a surprise, which at the time alarmed him considerably, and threatened to

be a more serious matter than even the mistake of hands in the tunnel. On the Greenock line the guard passes along the carriages while the train is going at full speed. Of this none of the party were aware. A short time after we had started, cigars had been lighted; the basso was indulging in a doze and the luxury of smoking in a corner seat of the carriage. The window was open. Presently a figure made its sudden appearance at the door. Jacko and Bibi were smothered with cloaks instantly; but not before the phantom-like guard had caught sight of them. No one spoke; the man quietly put his hand towards the slumbering basso, and removed the cigar from between his lips. The basso gave a bound.

"No smoking allowed, sir," said the guard.

"*Ich—ich*, smoke *nicht*," replied the basso; "give me my cigar."

The Impresario interfered, and settled the matter by substituting something more negotiable than the cigar in the guard's open hand.

"All right, sir, only must do my duty," said the man. "I won't trouble you again."

The party had a calm passage to Belfast, but

were nevertheless very glad to get on shore the next morning. The other five weeks of their tour were a repetition of the daily work of eating, drinking, singing, and travelling; at least, so I was told. I had to leave my agreeable companions early in the second week, and heard but little of them until they returned to London.

CHAPTER XVI.

Some may think that I ought to have given a more elaborate account of the concerts I heard during the week's tour. Those who delight in perusing the technical analysis of musical compositions may be disappointed that the music performed by my accomplished companions was not described at length. They would have been interested in reading how the ballad was (or might have been) constructed, how an enharmonic change in the 24th bar, by skilful management of the inverted sixth, adroit evasion of the supernatural ninth (!) and frequent use of the Dutch seventh (!), delightfully interrupted the flow of the melody, and excited the surprise of all listeners by the novelty of the effect thereby produced. Not that modern ballads often, if ever, give the critic an opportunity for any such display of learning, or that the one in question

was remarkable for its originality; but the most commonplace composition when described in words may gain an importance it does not intrinsically possess, and although the description may be quite unintelligible, it may amuse some readers by its mystification. Paintings may be so described as to give to the mind a perfect conception of their appearance and effect.

It is not difficult for the most unimaginative reader to realise, from description only, any subject that may be put on canvas.

A graphic account of one of the most crowded of Frith's pictures will enable you to recognise the picture when you see it as being that of which you have read. And you will find every detail exactly as you will have expected it to be represented. It is not so with music. No verbal statement of a melody will enable any one to identify the tune when heard as being that which it was attempted to describe. Melody in this respect has an affinity to perfume—nothing but direct contact with the nerves of sense can give a true idea of any scent whatever—and nothing but sound itself can impress you with a correct impression of

any musical composition, however minutely it may have been described in words. Nevertheless, analytical notices of musical works are of great service. To a mixed audience, especially, they afford a means of thoroughly appreciating, and therefore of more thoroughly enjoying, the music performed. They invest abstruse compositions with interest by pointing out their salient features, and directing attention to the intentions of the composer during the performance, providing always they are not too technical and abstruse in themselves. With their assistance the casual listener is enabled to trace the plan and form of a quartet or symphony as readily as he would the plot of a stage play.

Valuable as are analytical notices by others, they would be infinitely more so, were they given by the composers themselves.

How interesting and instructive would such a preface be to the works of the illustrious musicians Mozart, Beethoven, or Mendelssohn? And the same observation applies to painting.

Indeed the remarks of Edgar Allan Poe on the subject in his "Essay upon the Philosophy of

Composition," are quite as applicable to painting and music as to prose and poetry. "How interesting a paper might be written," he observes, "by any author who would—that is to say, who could—detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world it is difficult to say; but, perhaps, the autorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any other cause. Most writers, poets in especial, prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy, an ecstatic intuition, and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the vacillating and elaborate crudities of thought; at the true purposes seized only at the last moment; at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view; at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable; at the cautious selections and rejections; at the painful erasures and interpolations; in a word, at the wheels and pinions, the tackle for scene shifting, the step ladders and demon traps, the

cock's feathers, the red paint, and the black patches which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary histrio. On the other hand, the case is by no means common in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been gained. In general, suggestions having arisen pell-mell, are perused and forgotten in a similar manner."

It will be urged, perhaps, that such a paper as Edgar Poe here describes, one detailing the process by which a composition attained its ultimate point of completion, would not be an analytical notice of the nature of those to which I refer. Exception may be taken to the imaginings of our painters and composers being designated as cock's feathers, red paint, or black patches; but letting that pass, it must be conceded that such an account of any standard work by the author himself would be far more important, as being more instructive, than the minutest examination of the details and construction of the work by the most intelligent critic, who, in his cold-hearted analysis, is but too

likely to smother the inspirations of genius in obscure calculations and technical phraseology.

Composers, it would seem, are less willing if not less able to define their system of thought by words, than either painters, poets, or prose writers. Musical composition appears so essentially imaginative as to defy any attempt to explain its origin or trace its progress satisfactorily. Glück is perhaps the only musician who, in the prefaces to his operas, has described his mode of thought and plan of work.

In the preface to *Alceste*, dedicated to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, 1745, he sets forth the principles of his style as follows:—

"When I determined to compose music for this poem, I proposed to myself to shun various abuses in composition that the vanity of singers, or excessive complacency of composers, had introduced, and which had rendered the Italian Opera a most fatiguing and ridiculous, instead of a splendid and beautiful spectacle. I endeavoured to reduce music to its legitimate purpose, which is that of seconding poetry, in order to strengthen the expression of its sentiments and the interest of the fable without interrupting the action or weakening it by superfluous embellishments. It struck me that music ought to aid poetry as vivacity of colouring and a happy agreement of light and shade strengthen the effect of a correct and well-designed picture by animating the figures without altering the outline. I have, therefore, never in this opera interrupted a

singer in the warmth of a dialogue, in order to introduce a tedious ritornelle, nor have I stopped him in the midst of a discourse to display his agility of voice in a long cadence. I have never deemed it requisite to hurry over the second part of an air when it consisted of the most impassioned and important portion of the subject in order to repeat the words of the first part four times over, or to finish when the sense does not conclude, in order to give the singer an opportunity of showing that he can vary a passage in several ways, and disguise it in his own peculiar manner. In short, I have attempted to reform those abuses against which good sense and good taste have so long declaimed in vain. I have considered that the overture ought to prepare the audience for the character of the coming action and its subjects; that the instrumental accompaniments should be used only in proportion to the degree of interest and passion of the drama, and also that it is principally requisite to avoid too marked a disparity in the dialogue between air and recitative, in order not to break the sense of a period, nor interrupt in a wrong place the energy of the action. Lastly, I have thought that I should use every effort in aiming at simplicity, and have accordingly avoided making any show of difficulties at the expense of clearness. I have set no value on novelty, unless it sprang from the expression of the subject."

No words can more clearly define the true principles of musical composition—principles more apparent in the works of Mozart and Beethoven than even in those of Glück himself. The comparative superiority in genius of those who followed him does not affect the hypothesis of which there here seems sufficient proof, that Glück was the first to throw off the trammels of the old school,

and taking a legitimate view of the true purport of dramatic music, to direct the course of those who followed him. His theory of musical expression is more fully discussed in his letters published collectively under the title *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Révolution operée dans la Musique*, and in the preface to *Paris et Helène*, in which he regrets to have found so few imitators, not foreseeing that the theory he had propounded was to become the standard of excellence whereby all dramatic composition would be subsequently judged. Glück's literary essays are quite as interesting and instructive as his musical works.

To many it may appear but a vain endeavour to reduce to rule, and account materially for mental action, which is too purely subtle in its nature to be submitted to such a process. At any rate, if an analysis, not too technical in its nature, enables an audience to follow a composer more closely in his treatment of his subject, and better to understand the plan of a composition, it thereby fulfils an important purpose, and becomes a means of diffusing knowledge which should not be neglected—although an analysis, however well done,

can be of little use (as far as musical compositions are concerned) unless illustrated by the performance of the composition under examination.

The analysis or description of a work, if not undertaken by the author, painter, or composer, is evidently the duty of the critic—the professor of that branch of learning recently designated the "Gay Science," for the plausible reason that the immediate aim of all art being the cultivation of pleasure, criticism is of necessity the science of the laws of pleasure, and can be called by no more appropriate name than that which it has lately received.

Criticism, in common with every other profession, has its grades, its honours and rewards, its penalties and pains. Those critics whose judgment is highly valued, and who have acquired a reputation in the more luxurious resources of the profession, can sit at home at ease, and by recording their written opinions of the works submitted to their criticism, make a handsome income. Others not less worthy, though not so fortunate in the subject they have chosen on

which to exercise their skill, lead a most laborious life.

I can imagine nothing more irksome in literary pursuits than the duties of a musical or dramatic critic engaged on a daily paper. Those elaborate and ably written notices of the productions of the stage which appear in the London journals the morning after an important musical or dramatic work has been performed, are conceived and written during the night after the excitement and fatigue of witnessing a stage representation that has probably lasted until past midnight. The physical labour thereby incurred is considerable, the mental exertion must be immense. The duties of a parliamentary reporter during the session are very onerous, but those of the critics who have to epitomise and write leaders upon the debates are of necessity still more so. In this branch of the profession there is, however, some respite during certain months in the year, but for those who undertake theatrical criticism there would seem to be no rest.

A short time since I met with a characteristic letter of Léon Gozlan, one of the most distin-

guished *feuilletonistes* of the Paris press. It was addressed to Roqueplan, of the *Constitutionnel*, and intended as a farewell of the writer, who had for three years been the dramatical and musical critic of the paper, but who found the duties of his position too wearisome for him to continue. It will, perhaps, interest some on this side of the channel to apply the remarks of Léon Gozlan to places nearer home than those he mentions, and, as is often done in free translations from the French, to give to the extracts I have made from his letter a local colouring and name.

"The writer for a newspaper," he says, "has two functions to perform—the work of a man and that of a beast of burden. The second of these duties is inseparable from the first. To speak more clearly, theatrical matters involve a state of servitude which must be accepted, or writing be abandoned altogether. I renounce both. The analysis of sixteen pieces at the *Français* has determined me to make this sacrifice. I therefore bid an everlasting farewell to my fetters. Adieu to the foul and greasy chandelier of the *Gaietés*—adieu to the iron seats (whose imprint

will always remain upon me) of the *Porte St. Martin*—and adieu to the admirable *Stalles d'orchestre* of the *Français*. I flee from prison to pastoral delights—to the fields where I shall write 'Le Mie Prigioni,' as did Silvio Pellico.

"I tender my thanks to those who learned to decipher my nocturnal hieroglyphics, and committed no errors except at the expense of common sense—who made me say, instead of '*laissons faire la Republique*'—'*faisons frire la Republique*'—who never could in their rapid work express *pentalope*, *macaron*, *catholique*, but always *penlatope*, *recamon* and *calothique*. I thank them.

"But before starting, a word of advice to young theatrical critics—to those who are about to commence their career at the *Cirque Olympique*. No false vanity, my friends; do not blush for the literature of the stable. Observe how I educated myself! I made my first appearance criticising a balloonist, and terminate my career in praising Faure in my last criticism on 'Irène.' This is satisfactory, after three years' journalism. Nevertheless, I shall not receive *la croix d'honneur*.

"From the *Cirque*, my young friends, you will be promoted to the *Gaieté*. Be not too strict. Be amiable to the box-keepers, who are familiar with you and offer you their snuff-box, and who applaud the emasculated ravings of M. Marty.

"Be good-natured towards the *Porte St. Martin!* M. Hamel deserves your kindness, M. Delangle your friendship. Nevertheless, endeavour to wear always the same cravat, the same coat, or some mark on your forehead, the whole year through, without which the check-takers will refuse to recognise you, and daily dispute your right of admission.

"Place no faith in the illusion of the provinces, that in coming to Paris to seize the pen of Aristarchus (a word which I advise you never to make use of), success and happiness await you behind the scenes. Behind the scenes there is nothing but heavy masses that crush you, and 'supers,' six feet high, who tread upon your toes.

"Behind the scenes, moreover, an actress is nothing more than a stage property—a scene—a box of paint. She cares nothing for you, my

friends; nothing whatever. Do not believe in that privilege of journalism.

"Again, do not suppose that actors will tempt you by dinners and presents—silver services, diamond pins. Your honesty will never be in danger. Be not Aristides to a sure and certain loss. Your door will never be approached by an artist wishing you to praise him. Do not exaggerate your importance. A writer for the press is something, but no very great thing. On the other hand, if you ever expect to equal Latouche, I advise you to have faith in the luck of the side scenes, and the successes of a pamphlet. May no accident ever prevent your noticing a piece. A writer is expected to die in his stall. Your wedding bells may ring—your father may be dying, and wish to give you his last blessing—obey the prompter's signal—you are the property of the public."

The critic's duties, which disgusted Léon Gozlan, are even more arduous in London than in Paris.

With us, custom has confirmed the practice of giving notices of stage representations in all the principal daily papers, the day following their first

performance. This is not the case in Paris—at least, not to any extent. The writers of the Art *feuilletons* of the French papers take time to prepare their essays, which are, nevertheless, in no respect superior, but sometimes the reverse, to the criticisms of important works which appear in the London journals, often written under the most disadvantageous circumstances.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE concert tourists came to see me on their return to town. They had all had a pleasant tour, and seemed to regret their daily travelling and concerts, although, during the time, some of them had complained loudly enough of fatigue. Their complaints, I fancy, must have been attributable to that love of grumbling which seems inherent in some natures.

Whatever the Impresario may have had to say to the result of the tour, the rest of the party came home with their pockets full of money, having, as is usual in such undertakings, had all their expenses paid, and nothing but agreeable recollections of the time they had passed in the country. There was one, however, of the party who might have reproached himself with rash conduct in a tunnel; but even he said nothing of the torture to which his behaviour had exposed him—how he

had been tormented by his fair friends, who on one occasion nearly frightened him to death by putting Jacko into his bed. Even the basso, in common with the rest, was sorry that the tour was over.

My next opportunity of participating in the joys and sorrows of artistic life was when I joined a company brought together for the purpose of giving operas in the provinces.

Grisi and Mario were of the party. From my youth up, all my musical recollections are associated with these two distinguished singers. It is one of my greatest "pleasures of memory" to recal the days I have passed in their society—to remember the delightful evenings they have afforded me—their successes—the friendly relations that have so long existed between us.

The name of Giulia Grisi is the last link in the chain that connects the Italian opera of times gone by with that of the present day. Of the quartet, Grisi, Lablache, Rubini, and Tamburini, for whom "I Puritani" was composed, Grisi is now the only one to be heard occasionally. Rubini is no more. Tamburini has left the stage, and never

appears in public except upon the Boulevards. Lablache died at Naples on January 23, 1858, at the age of 62, in the villa now inhabited by his son-in-law, Thalberg. A very interesting notice of the great basso is to be found in the 14th vol. of the "Revue des Deux Mondes." We shall never see his like again. The Jove-like head, planted on a colossal body, seemed the incarnation of every priestly attribute, when the grand old Druid Oroveso trod the stage. Who that ever saw and heard him can forget the majesty of his look and thunder of his voice!

Rossini, writing an account of the first night of "I Puritani" in Paris to a friend at Boulogne, naïvely declared it was quite unnecessary for him to say anything about the duet "Suoni la tromba" between Lablache and Tamburini, for he was quite sure it must have been heard all over the country. There never was, and never will be again in our time, such a marvellously-toned bass voice as that of Lablache. In private life, Lablache was a most delightful companion, full of anecdote and repartee. His power of facial expression was remarkable. I have seen him

portray a coming storm, every phase of a tempest, and the return of fine weather by the mere changes of his countenance—Grisi sitting opposite to him at table, and commanding the appearance of the different phenomena.

His travelling about was always a serious matter. No ordinary vehicle was safe to hold him. His enormous weight rendered it necessary for his servant to take about a chair and bedding for his especial use. It was difficult to find a carriage the doors of which were large enough for him to pass.

On one occasion, the rehearsal at her Majesty's Theatre terminating sooner than was expected, and before his brougham had come to fetch him, a street cab was ordered. The cabman looked alarmed when his fare issued from the stage door, and showed the test which the vehicle had to undergo.

"He'll never get in, sir," said the man, despairingly to me, as I was shaking hands with Lablache, who seemed also to have his doubts upon the question. We approached the cab; the door was open wide. Sideways, frontways, head-

ways, backways the prize basso tried to effect an entry, but in vain. Without assistance, it was impossible. Two men went to the opposite side and dragged with all their force, while two others did their utmost to lift him in.

"It's no go," cried the cabman; "he'll ruin my cab."

One more effort. A long pull, a strong push—a pull and a push together—the point was gained—Lablache inside, puffing and blowing from the exertion. But the difficulties had not yet come to an end. Wishing to change his position—he had inadvertently sat down with his back to the horse—he rose, the whole of his prodigious weight was upon the few slender boards forming the bottom of the cab. Imagine the horror of the cabman, the astonishment of Lablache, and the surprise of a large crowd which had been attracted by the terrible struggle that had been going on, when the boards gave way, and his feet and legs were seen standing in the road! The driver swore—Lablache grinned—the crowd roared. No scene in a pantomime was ever more ludicrous. Fortunately, Lablache sustained no injury. Had

the horse moved, the consequences of the accident might have been serious. The same process of shoving and pulling, but reversed, was necessary to extricate him. Whether greater violence than at first was used or not, the door in this instance was torn from its hinges, and the cab (previously a good looking vehicle) now presented the most melancholy appearanee of a complete wreck. The cabman uttered curses loud and deep, but was pacified by the assurance that the damage should be made good, and his loss of time remunerated. I do not think the great basso ever again attempted to ride in a hack cab.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THROUGHOUT her extraordinary career, no one individual can boast of possessing a greater share of that mysterious quality which is called "good luck," in addition to transcendent talent, than Giulia Grisi.

Grisi has often told me the story of her *début;* how, when hardly fourteen years old, she sang the part of Emma in the "Zelmira" at Bologna. It was at an hour's notice. There was no one to be found to replace the singer who had suddenly been taken ill. Giulia, to the surprise of all her family, offered to relieve the manager from his embarrassment; was accepted, and acquitted herself admirably. So satisfied was the Impresario with her success, that he gave her an engagement for all the season. From Bologna Grisi went to Florence, and thence to Milan in 1831. On every occasion the same "good luck" attended

her until her first appearance in London in 1834, when, strange to say, the young *débutante* was but coldly received. She had previously sung in Paris with great success, when Laporte had heard and engaged her. Grisi was disconcerted with her reception in "La Gazza Ladra," the opera in which she first appeared, and expressed her disappointment to Laporte. "*Cela ne fait rien*," said that enterprising Impresario, "it will be all right." His prediction was fulfilled. Before the termination of the first season, Grisi had become a popular prima donna, a position she maintained in spite of the opposition of innumerable rivals.

Perhaps no singer ever paid so little attention to her voice as Giulia Grisi—none whose great dramatic efforts were less premeditated, and more impulsive. When the two theatres, Covent Garden and Her Majesty's, were open some seasons ago, I called upon a prima donna of the latter house, and found her reclining upon a sofa, with a cold water bandage round her throat. "What's the matter?" I exclaimed, fearing she was indisposed. "Oh! nothing," was the reply,

in a very low voice, "but I sing this evening, and am making preparation." On leaving this lady "in pickle," I had occasion to call upon Grisi. Knowing she was announced to sing in the "Huguenots" that evening, I was uncertain whether she would receive me. My doubts were however soon removed when I reached the house. "Madame is in the garden, sir," said the servant as I entered, and pointing to where he supposed his mistress to be. I followed his directions, but tried in vain to find the Diva, who presently came running out of the kitchen, excusing herself by saying she had a new cook, to whom she was obliged to give instructions.

A more domesticated woman than Giulia Grisi never lived. It is an interesting family tableau to see her watching the performances of Mario's three daughters. Rita, the eldest, a handsome girl of sixteen, is seated at the pianoforte, accompanying the two younger, Clelia and Cecilia, who, standing on each side their sister, sing duets admirably, their sweet little voices in perfect tune blending charmingly together. Grisi directs them with affectionate assiduity, while Mario hovers

about the piano, listening with evident delight to the singing of his children.

The campaign of the Opera Company before mentioned was announced to commence in Dublin. The Impresario had formed a very attractive party, consisting of about fifteen well-known names, chosen with due regard for the operas he wished to give being efficiently "cast." In the arrangement of an operatic provincial tour, this is a matter of some difficulty—similar in its character to making out a concert programme. The principal singers will not sing every night, and where a company includes more than one great attraction, as was the case in this instance, it is desirable to divide the forces, allowing the favourite tenor to sing alternate nights with the popular prima donna, and giving an opera in which they both appear together as a *bonne-bouche* to the public once a week.

In order to effect this, it is necessary to engage a double company, including a tenor to support the prima donna, and a prima donna leggiera to sing with the primo tenore. The baritones, basses, and other tourists must be "up" in all

the operas that are to be performed; and it is astonishing what versatility of talent will be displayed by them on these occasions.

Oroveso, Bartolo, Gubetta, Don Pasquale, Ferrando, Banco, Sparafucile, Don Bucefalo, Tristano, Duke Alfonso, Macbeth, and Leporello will be sung in succession by the same artist, as they were during the tour of which we are about to speak,—the versatile Ciampi; Adalgisa, Sonnambula, Nancy, Donna Elvira, and Rosina find a representative in the same prima donna. The tenors are more limited in their range of characters, a *tenore di grazia* being seldom as well worth hearing as a *tenore robusto*, although we had one with us, on the occasion in question, who is incomparable as Count Almaviva and Raoul, but then he is an exception to every rule, and perhaps the greatest tenor of this or any other age.

Besides the casting of the operas the Impresario had to provide dresses for his party, and these cost him no little trouble and expense. Real silks and satins, costly velvets and moirés antiques alone satisfy the requirements of the queens of song. The theatrical wardrobe of a

first-rate opera company constitutes a property of no little value to its owner, but, singular to say, of very little importance in the opinion of anybody else. Nothing is more expensive in the first instance, and no property falls so rapidly in value.

The journey to Dublin had occupied the thoughts of many of the touring party some days before we started. The sea passage from Holyhead was looked forward to in fear and trembling. Visions of rocking steamboats and angry waves had troubled the sleep of nearly all the foreign magnates.

"Shall we have fine time?" I was asked by an attenuated Frenchman, whom I afterwards found to be the *tenore d'utilità* of the party.

"I cannot say," I replied. "Are you ill at sea?"

"No," he replied, looking very miserable at the thought, "I am nay-vare ill, but I am alvays vary seeke."

We were at the old starting place, Euston Square, all the party having been summoned there to leave by the night train for Dublin. Lucrezia had laid in a stock of antidotes and eau de Cologne for the *mal de mer*, enough for

all of us had we wanted them. The Duke Alfonso had a zinc belt fastened so tightly round his body as to threaten quite a contrary effect to that intended. Amina, who was closely followed by her mamma (very unlike the Contralto's respected relative whom we met a short time since), looked very timid, and asked the Impresario anxiously, "*S'il y avait des rochers près de Dublin?*" She had evidently been dreaming of the sea, and was nervous in consequence. Gennaro, who seemed more accustomed to travelling than any of the party, provided himself with a reading lamp, which he carefully affixed to the cloth lining of the carriage. We were told off by the Impresario, and conducted to the carriages that had been reserved for us. The Impresario's secretary came to count us when we were all seated. He went to the second class compartment to see that the costumiers and servants were all right.

A mysterious lady in a green silk dress was observed to get into a carriage with her maid.

The signal was given for the train to start, and we were on the road to Dublin.

Gennaro challenged Gubetta, who was seated opposite to him, to a game at chess. They adjusted the board, and placed the men. All went on swimmingly at first by the light of Gennaro's patent lamp, but suddenly the light became unsteady: it had a spasm; the spasm was followed by click, and the candle in the patent lamp was shot like a rocket up to the ceiling of the carriage. It fell into Lucrezia's lap. "*Che cosa è 'sta roba?*" exclaimed the Duchess. We tried in vain to restore the candle to its proper place; it was at last put away, and condemned as useless. The game of chess was stopped, and most of the travellers in our carriage, having nothing better to do, went to sleep.

At length we reached Bangor. The noise of the wind, as the train dashed along the Welsh coast, awakened us. The anxiety of the attenuated Frenchman increased momentarily. It was painfully apparent in his pallid face. Heads were thrust out of the windows to see what sort of a night it was.

"*Che vento!*" said Alfonso, and it was indeed a wind—a most stormy night. Lucrezia

declared she would remain at Holyhead. Gennaro expressed his astonishment at her proposing to do so. Alfonso adjusted his belt. The prima donna leggiera, poor little Amina, implored some one to look after a good berth for her, if they must really cross. The thin Frenchman grew whiter; he buttoned his coat, and looked worse and worse the nearer we got to Holyhead.

The night was pitch dark. The steamer rolled heavily at her moorings. We reached the end of Holyhead Pier, when mysterious-looking beings in waterproof coverings from head to foot opened the doors and requested us to alight. The scene was not cheerful. The screaming of the engine, the blustering wind that rudely blew about Lucrezia's travelling cloak as she got out of the train, the sailors hoarsely shouting at each other in the pitchy darkness,—all combined to form an *ensemble* the reverse of encouraging.

"Shall we have a good passage, Captain?" asked the Impresario of a figure in a pilot coat.

"Better than to-morrow," was the curt reply.

The Duchess hesitated, and many of the party

gathered round her to see what she would resolve to do. It was a matter of importance to the Impresario that the journey should be continued, for there was only a day to spare before the performances in Dublin were to commence. He was, however, evidently unwilling to insist upon the party going on board. After some conversation, Gennaro left the group and led the way to the steamer. Lucrezia followed him, and so did Gubetta, Amina, and many others. The Duke had confidence in his belt, and was already on board. The Frenchman was not to be seen. He had returned to the train and went clandestinely to the hotel in Holyhead. The ladies were conducted to their saloon, and directions given to the stewardess to pay them especial attention, directions which, however, were quite unnecessary; the sea-nurse recognised her patients, and expressed her delight at having them in charge.

The vessel is under weigh, and already pitching and tossing about in the boiling sea outside the harbour of Holyhead. Gennaro paces the deck, cigar in mouth, trying boldly to conquer a

certain unpleasant sensation that is fast gaining upon him. The servants and costumiers endeavour to warm themselves against the iron platings of the engine room; suddenly a huge wave dashes over the vessel and drenches them to the skin. Lucrezia is extended upon a sofa in the ladies' cabin.

"*Gennaro, Gennaro, mi sento male!*" She calls, but in vain; there is no antidote at hand. Gennaro by this time has dropped his cigar, and is hanging in a pitiable state over the side of the boat. Lucrezia suffers, but not alone. Orsini on the couch opposite groans most dolefully; she inquires in a distressing manner why she ever was induced to venture on the ocean.

In half-an-hour the worst anticipations are realised. Antidotes, zinc belts, eau de Cologne are of no avail. The warblers are hushed and prostrate; the only notes at all audible are indicative of distress and suffering. What noise is that like the falling of a house that wakes the stewardess out of a doze, and alarms the passengers? Lucrezia feebly raises her head, and sees Orsini lying on the floor. She has tumbled

off the couch, and fallen with a crash which threatened the safety of the ship and all on board. There she must lie until able to pick herself up, for all efforts of the stewardess to move her are futile.

It is, indeed, a rough night, and the wind has increased in violence. Some of the party think that the timid Frenchman was right to stop behind, and envy him his snug quarters in Holyhead. All are quite exhausted; their moaning and groaning become weaker and weaker. "Are we nearly there, steward?" asks the Impresario. "A quarter of an hour more, Sir," replies the man. The Impresario, who is lying in his berth, remarks that the same answer was given to the same question an hour since, and that quarters of an hour at sea must have an indefinite duration.

At length the welcome intelligence was brought the party that they were entering Kingstown harbour.

What a relief! One after another they struggled up the narrow gangway on the deck, and feasted their eyes with the sight of land.

Gennaro, who had been rolled up in tarpaulin

by a charitable sailor, was unpacked and helped upon his legs. The Duchess appeared in a most lamentable plight, and vowed in a husky voice that nothing should ever tempt her to cross the channel again. Orsini rolled over, and got up. Amina treated the matter more philosophically, and was thankful it had been no worse.

The vessel was alongside, and we disembarked. It was early in the morning; nevertheless a few ardent admirers of the Italian songsters had assembled to see them arrive. Being almost incapable of any voluntary exertion, they were put into the railway carriages and conveyed to Dublin, where they were finally housed at Morrisson's Hotel.

CHAPTER XIX.

We had all had rough travelling enough to necessitate a few hours' rest.

Lucrezia's first anxiety was to telegraph to London to inquire about her family, although she had only left them the evening before. The message was sent, and an immediate answer was requested and paid for.

It was agreed to dine at six o'clock, and at that hour the whole party assembled. It was a critical *réunion* for all concerned, for then it would be seen how far we were likely to be agreeable companions for each other or not—questions of no slight importance, considering that the pleasure or discomfort of the ensuing six weeks depended thereon.

The Impresario took his place at the head of the table, with Lucrezia and Amina at each side of him—the conductor, who on this occasion was

Benedict, being at the other end, a long way off; the intervening space was filled up by the basses, baritones, tenors, and other members of the company in their respective places. My enterprising friend must be careful how he divides his attention between the two ladies on his right and left. He must not let the *prima donna assoluta* suppôse she she is neglected, or the *prima donna leggiera* imagine for a moment that there is any partiality shown to her opposite neighbour. Not that they are jealous, but terribly tenacious of their rights, and particularly so on such an occasion as the present. Let the Impresario have a care, if he would not go *prima donna-cally* mad before the end of the tour.

The mother of Amina, sitting next her, is a stout lady, with puffy, dough-coloured cheeks, and a reddish nose. She talks but little, except to the waiters, in very broken English, whenever a savoury dish, which is out of reach, attracts her notice; then woe to the attendants if they do not obey her almost unintelligible commands.

The dinner was a success. Conversation

became general. Lucrezia was in high spirits (the sea voyage being over, and a reply to the message having been received, accounted for it), and told some capital anecdotes, of which she has a store.

She got up and showed how she used to torment a Don Alfonso of former times; how she wickedly delighted to tease Tamburini in the celebrated "*Guai se ti sfugge.*" Then she gave an imitation of Ronconi's by-play in the same part, and of his grimaces, by which he would try to make her and Gennaro laugh at the most serious moment.

"That reminds me," said the Impresario, "of Malibran, who, when she was on her knees to Elvino, in the second act of the 'Sonnambula,' where Amina vows she is innocent, used to tickle Templeton, the tenor, under the arms to such a degree as to prevent his singing, and almost make him scream."

"That happened on one occasion," said Benedict, "and it was when Malibran had in some way offended Templeton at rehearsal, and he was sulky with her."

"A strange way of making up a quarrel," some one remarked.

"Bunn used to tell the story," said the Impresario.

The *primo baritono*, our merry Andrew, having forgotten the utter failure of the zinc belt, performed sundry conjuring tricks, to our infinite amusement, probably more derivable from the gestures and noise he made, than from any expertness exhibited in the art of legerdemain.

The cloth was removed, and after coffee, the ladies retired, embracing each other most affectionately. Mario invited some of the party to his private sitting-room, and to a game at chess. This was watched attentively in silence and fumes of smoke, until a questionable move would excite a discussion, so energetic, it might have been supposed that the fate of nations depended on the issue.

The party soon broke up, the few hours' repose in the morning having hardly compensated anyone for the knocking about of the night before. *Buona sera*—and everybody went off to bed, thankful they were not with the Frenchman, who had

all the enjoyment of the *traversée* to come, having left his *compagnons de voyage* so ignominiously at Holyhead.

Thus the first day of the opera tour might be said to have passed off propitiously enough, and so far augured well for the future.

The Impresario was quite at home at Morrisson's. Everyone connected with the Hotel, from the host downwards, gave him a hearty welcome. He was an old friend—had passed many pleasant days with his touring parties in the house, and was received accordingly.

Mike, the "boots," a strange character in his way, established himself as the Impresario's body-servant, and would allow no one to interfere with the privileges of that position.

Mike, who, as he advanced in years, was occasionally too weak to withstand the potent influence of whiskey, was more familiar with the Impresario than is usual between valets and their masters; his anxiety for the manager's welfare always increased when he had taken an extra tumbler of punch.

The morning after such indulgence, Mike would

enter into the Impresario's bedroom as early as six o'clock, and going up to the bedside, rouse the slumbering manager by pulling off the clothes and asking "What the divil he was lying there for?"

On the morning after our arrival, Mike was sent to the Impresario to inform him that the *basso profondo* was unwell.

The manager dressed quickly, and on going to Oroveso's apartment, found the old Druid panting and sighing with fear at having lost his voice.

The doctor was sent for, and soon arrived.

Behold him as he enters the sick room! His tall, well-built frame, slightly inclined to the obese, the genial smile upon his face, inspire the patient with confidence, as those of one competent and accustomed to grapple successfully with every symptom of disease. Like Colman's Dr. Bolus, who—

> "Though in trade,
> Which oftentimes will genius fetter,
> Read works of fancy, it is said,
> And cultivated the Belles Lettres"—

our doctor is an accomplished as well as a scientific man. His prescriptions are not perhaps

written in verse, but he makes his physic as palatable as it is efficacious, and he can, when he has restored his patients to convalescence, discourse as eloquently upon the ingredients of different gastronomical dainties, as he can learnedly upon any branch of the profession of which he is so distinguished a member. He is master of many languages, and addressed Oroveso in Italian—

"*Mostrate la língua.*"

The basso, who seemed puzzled to know why he should show his tongue because he had lost his voice, did as he was told.

"*Male quì?*" said the doctor, pointing to the throat."

"*Sì, molto male!*" replied the basso, to the horror of the Impresario, who was standing at the foot of the bed, anxiously waiting to know the doctor's opinion. Upon further examination, the doctor said that Oroveso would be all right by the evening if he kept quiet, and adopted the remedies prescribed, which prediction took a load off the Impresario's mind.

The doctor having retired, promising to see the

patient again during the day, the Impresario joined the breakfast party in the general sitting-room.

Benedict, who had been up betimes, was at the pianoforte busy, as he always is, at some musical work.

He had the score of "Norma" before him, and was showing Adalgisa the time and *cadenze* of the duets with the Diva.

Presently Madame Grisi made her appearance, looking handsomer in a simple white morning dress than any paint or finery could possibly have made her.

Her glossy black tresses hanging in luxuriant folds on her faultlessly-shaped neck and shoulders —her brilliant complexion and noble features, presented a picture which it was a privilege to look at—a study for a painter—a model of simplicity, grace, dignity, and beauty.

There was no "make-up," no desire apparent to produce effect; but the Diva's simple morning "mien and manner" were more fascinating than even her acting on the stage.

Breakfast over, all those who were to sing in

the evening went to the theatre, whither Benedict had already gone to rehearse.

We found him in the orchestra, beating time furiously.

The band and chorus made a deafening noise in the empty house. There was a confusion of tongues upon the stage—the foreign *régisseur*, and the English prompter were teaching the chorus their stage business, each after his own fashion. One, two, three—CRASH!!! and an awfully noisy chord is sounded by the band.

"E flat!" screamed Benedict.

"There is no E flat," said Mr. Levey, the popular leader.

"Then, there ought to be," replied the conductor.

Whereupon the violin part is handed to him, and he sees there's a mistake in the score. The correction was made, and the piece began again.

"We will go back to the eighth bar, from 'da capo,'" shouted Benedict; "have you found the place?"

"All right," said Mr. Levey for the orchestra.

One, two, three,—CRASH!!!

This time it was correct; the Conductor smiled and continued beating time with his "batoon" until some other difficulty occurred, when a repeat from some particular sign was necessary.

It is extraordinary how correctly a Dublin Orchestra reads the score of an opera at sight —the first reading is sometimes even better than the second—the musicians are on their mettle, and being all more or less musically gifted, can, when they please, distinguish themselves. Our celebrated composer, Balfe, went into training in the orchestra of the Dublin Theatre Royal, and one who will perhaps, some day, be not less eminent—W. C. Levey—was a member for some years of the band of which his father is the principal and leader.

During the rehearsal, the tourists had assembled on the stage, and were waiting about to know if they were required. The conductor at last gave them leave to go, saying, he would do without them. The opera rehearsing was "Norma," which all the singers knew perfectly, as did the conductor, who, however, had to remain in his place for some hours before he was satisfied that the band

and chorus were quite prepared for the evening performance.

Dinner had been ordered at the hotel at three o'clock; and we were all at table when Benedict came in, looking pale and tired with his morning's work. But he soon recovered himself, and was as lively as he always is when not hearing wrong notes and unintended orchestral effects. A short interval of rest, and it was necessary to go again to the theatre.

The time had arrived for the business of the tour to commence in earnest. Carriages were ordered. Gennaro, always the last but never too late, made Lucrezia cross by keeping her waiting at least half an hour; messages innumerable had been sent to him without avail. As usual, he took his time, and was not to be hurried. He was perhaps finishing a sketch with which he had been amusing himself all day, or he was writing home—the only place he ever does write to; for Mario is a dreadful correspondent. At last he came, watch in hand, calculating with provoking accuracy that it would take so many minutes to get to the theatre, ten more to dress, and then

there would be exactly two to spare. The Diva having a more elaborate toilette to make, became alarmed at the probable consequences of the delay. They reached the theatre, and repaired to their respective dressing-rooms, where their servants and the costumiers had been long waiting to receive them.

CHAPTER XX.

The doors of the house had just been thrown open, and crowds were rushing into the galleries and pit, much to the satisfaction of the respected manager, who—as was his wont—walked up and down behind the curtain, listening to the grateful sound of the theatre filling. Pleasant noise of delightful confusion—every footfall money, every voice a shilling. He was thoughtful;—now and then a placid smile lighted up his countenance, and he would stretch out his hands as if to grasp some imaginary object—doubtless the coin, his share of the Italian Opera.

But difficulties had to be overcome before the announcement of the evening could be fulfilled.

A box containing costumes was missing—had been left behind at Kingstown or Holyhead—no matter where—it was now not to be found when wanted. Here was a dilemma little dreamt of by

the crowds which thronged the theatre, and noisily clamoured for their amusement to begin.

What was to be done? How could Oroveso appear without his robes, or Flavius, minus tights? Horrible perplexity! The costumier approached the musing manager, and with tears in his eyes related the disaster which threatened the success of the opera engagement at its very outset.

A general search was made through the wardrobe, and substitutes for the missing dresses were eventually discovered, which, although perhaps not quite orthodox, were still sufficiently correct to be made available. This obstacle having been surmounted, another presented itself. A speech had to be made for the basso, whose hoarseness had not altogether disappeared since the morning. Without the speech he obstinately refused to sing, and there was no alternative. The time of commencement had long since passed, owing to the delay caused by the missing dresses. The audience had become uproarious. It was no easy matter to claim their indulgence under such circumstances. A speaker, however, was found bold enough to

face them; and who, having received his instructions, proceeded to fulfil the ungrateful task.

His appearance before the curtain excited the suspicions of a disappointment, and the reception he met with was anything but flattering. Taking advantage of a short lull in the expressions of dissatisfaction with which he had been greeted, he began his speech:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I am sorry to inform you——"

Yells of indignation, shouts of derision, hissing, hooting, and every other possible noise, followed this announcement, and drowned the voice of the unhappy spokesman. In spite of the most suppliant appeals to their feelings, in dumb show, the audience would *not* be informed, no matter how sorry the speaker might be.

After a while the storm abated, and a hearing was obtained. When it became known that the apology was only for the *basso profondo*, and not for the popular tenor as had been supposed, order was restored, and the opera at last began.

The old favourites were received enthusiastically; the audience soon forgot how long they

had been kept waiting, and expressed their approbation as loudly as they had—but a short time before—given vent to their displeasure.

Their signs of delight frightened Adelgisa, who was not accustomed to the whistling, screaming, and shouting, by which a Dublin gallery testifies its feelings when acting or music excites its enthusiasm.

The first act being concluded, the pit and gallery were on the best possible terms with themselves, and with the artists—whose turn it now was to listen to the singing, by which, to the surprise of all strangers, the *habitués* of the galleries of the Theatre Royal while away the time during the entr'actes. In no other country does a public make itself so completely at home in a theatre as in Ireland. There is no restraint. They sing, they converse; and their witty remarks, when not too personal, are amusing enough. Sometimes a head-dress or a pair of gloves of a remarkable colour in the boxes will attract their attention, and the wearer be forthwith honoured with "three cheers." A white hat is an especial object of dislike, and vain is the hope of the

owner that it will pass unnoticed; wherever he may hide it, concealment is impossible, it is sure to be discovered and hooted, when there's nothing better to do. Concertinas and flutes are brought into the gallery, on which solos are performed at times with very remarkable skill. Occasionally a gallery tenor will give an imitation of some popular singer. On the night in question he, sang "*Ah! che la morte*," and was for a short time listened to attentively, but the love of fun was too strong, and hints such as "Mario's listening to yer," (as indeed he was), "Sing out!" &c., convulsed the house with laughter, and completely upset the ambitious effort of the imitator, whose voice presently was drowned in the uproarious chorus of a national air. Mr. Levey, the talented leader of the band, is familiarly addressed as "Lavey," and affectionate inquiries are nightly made after his numerous progeny.

When Verdi's "Macbeth," was given for the first time in Dublin, the long symphony preceding the sleep-walking scene did not altogether please the galleries. The theatre was darkened—everything looked gloomy and mysterious—the music

being to match. The curtain rose, and the nurse and doctor were discovered seated at the door of Lady Macbeth's chamber, a bottle of physic and a candle being on the table that was between them. Viardot (who was playing Lady Macbeth) was waited for in the most profound silence—a silence which was broken by a voice from the gallery crying out—"Hurry, now Mr. Lavey tell us, is it a boy or a girl?"—an inquiry which nearly destroyed the effect of the whole scene, by the commotion it created.

But while talking of the gods and their doings, which always cause the Italians great amusement, I forget our tourists, who, by this time must have finished the opera, and gone back to the hotel to supper.

The carriage of the *prima donna* had of course been surrounded by a crowd of musical fanatics, mad to get a peep at the Diva as she left the theatre. How they used to struggle and fight for a good look into the carriage! Some would scramble on to the roof, others mount the wheels, at the imminent peril of broken legs. Sometimes the horses were

detached, and their places usurped by a string of enthusiasts.

One little lady to whom this compliment was paid reminded me forcibly, as she sat in the carriage, of that picture which represents a goddess seated in a chariot drawn by a flock of geese.

The party at supper was joined by the Frenchman, who indulged us with an interesting account of his voyage from Holyhead,—how ill he had been,—a most agreeable accompaniment to the soup and macaroni. This charming narrative was interrupted by Lucrezia suddenly rising from her chair. "*Dio mio*," she exclaimed, "*siamo tredici!*" Now, I think I have said enough in a former chapter about No. 13 and its supposed evil influences, to explain the cause of Lucrezia's exclamation. Misfortune was declared to be approaching us, and was indicated by the surest sign. All present expressed alarm except the Frenchman, who was henceforth looked upon as a heretic, because he continued to eat his supper regardless of what might happen. He was, in fact, the cause of the discomfort. Whether wittingly or not, he had augmented our original

healthy number twelve to its present ominous amount. What was to be done? The Impresario did not know. Relief, however, came before the spell had time to work even upon the condition of the supper. Wonderful interposition, not duly appreciated by the foreigners, but nevertheless looked upon as a providential deliverance from difficulty! Signor Fortini walked into the room, much to the consolation of Lucrezia and the rest, who then resumed their seats, and finished a hearty supper; the Impresario assuring the last comer that he was Fortini by name and fourteen by nature, a remark he did not, and was not expected to, understand.

CHAPTER XXI.

"WELL, Mike," said the Impresario to "Boots," when that functionary came into his room the next morning, "and what did you think of the opera?" (Mike had had a free ticket for the pit given him to hear "Norma.")

"It's throuble I had to get in at all," replied Mike, surlily.

"How was that?" asked the manager, who was still in bed.

"Sure we had a fight for it," said "Boots" a little more good humouredly.

"But you were in the pit, were you not?"

"Ah, that was I," said Mike.

"And how did you think Madame Grisi sang?"

"What, the lady as is in 59, d'ye mean?"

"Yes," said the Impresario.

"By the saints! 59 sang like an angel in the

beginning of the play, but what a divil she turned out when 81 riled her; and how she did scream at that poor little lady who's in 84."

"You mean Adelgisa, Mike," said the Impresario.

"Faith, then, I didn't know the name but what's on her boxes, and that ain't it," replied Mike.

"And what did you think of Oroveso?" asked the manager.

"I didn't hear him," said Mike; "but 82, as had the physic in the afternoon, seemed pretty much put out with 59 at the end, and made a mighty to do with the poor thing. Did yer ever see such a set of fellows as those were in their night-gowns and sandy wigs?" Mike by this time had "melted," and became more talkative than usual. He alluded to the Druids of the previous evening, and certainly their costumes were not becoming. The Impresario endeavoured to explain the plot of the opera, but Mike so completely identified the *dramatis personæ* with the Nos. of the rooms they occupied in the hotel, that it was almost impossible to make him re-

member the characters they assumed on the stage.

As with the concert party of former days, the constant recurrence of the same bill of fare considerably interfered with the happiness of our present companions. Boiled fowls and haunches of mutton, invariably preceded by a Dublin Bay haddock and the same soup, gave rise to murmurs of discontent which threatened a mutiny.

Was any one an adept at cooking macaroni?

Polonini volunteered, but was then refused admission to the kitchen. Could not the matter be arranged? Were not the jealous feelings of the cook in possession be to appeased? Negotiations were set on foot which led ultimately to a satisfactory understanding, based upon the principles of free trade. The foreigner was admitted, and allowed the use of all the kitchen utensils, which, to his honour be it said, he knew how to handle remarkably well.

Whole days he passed in this his favorite occupation, for which he was more suited than to represent indignant fathers and rejected lovers.

The basso had evidently been intended by nature for a cook—an artist cook,—one who can make a savoury dish out of almost impossible materials. Dear old Polonini! I see him now, as he stood before the fire anxiously watching the progress of the macaroni boiling in the enormous saucepan which had been bought by the party by subscription for his use.

A white night-cap, and a small napkin round his waist, gave him a far more professional kitchen appearance than the old lady could present, who, with arms akimbo, stared in mute astonishment, and, I have no doubt, inward admiration, at the expertness of her new ally. How warm he got over the fire, and what an exertion it was to lift the saucepan off the bars!

But a triumph was in store for him. He sent the macaroni up to table, and followed it to witness its reception. What cheering and shouting! The basso never excited such enthusiasm in any opera. He is embraced by Amina's mamma, thanked by the prima donna, and made to place himself, night-cap, apron, and all at the head of the board, where he presides and distributes the

macaroni with the dignity of a high priest of the profound mysteries of cookery Not a word is spoken for some time. Those who are served are enjoying the treat so artistically prepared by the good-natured basso; others busy themselves in looking to their spoon and fork, and tying napkins over their shirt fronts preparatory to receiving the delicacy.

The plates are at length cleared, and not a single stick of macaroni remains. The basso was from that day promoted and appointed head-cook to the tour. In the operas his *rôles* were played by those of his comrades who too well appreciated his talents in the kitchen to allow him to waste his time upon the stage. Nothing was now apparently required to render the happiness of the party complete. The rehearsals and performances went on with uninterrupted success; the only social want had been macaroni, and that had been providentially supplied to an extent which satisfied the most inordinate feeder.

CHAPTER XXII.

ONE of the party—a baritone—was particularly partial to the national dish. It could not be called, however, *his* national dish, seeing that he was a Swiss by birth, and macaroni is the exclusive right of the Italian *cuisine.*

He had met with immense success at the theatre—had sent the galleries mad with a Swiss tune he introduced in "Linda di Chamounix." They made him repeat it three or four times every night, and yelled with delight when the symphony of the song began. They called for it, and would have it too, in "Lucia," much to the scandal of the less enthusiastic portion of the audience, to whom the "yodel" was inconsistent with Donizetti's music, and the plot of the opera. His extraordinary reception at the theatre turned his head—a surfeit of macaroni upset his stomach. In a short time the poor baritone was prostrate

with fever and indigestion. In vain he disregarded the first symptoms of indisposition: every round of applause increased his excitement; every mouthful of food made him worse. He complained to no one; but his flushed cheeks and swollen appearance were the subject of general remark. At length the fever affected his brain. One night, when everybody was in bed, the whole hotel was aroused from slumber by his singing the "yodel" song at the top of his voice. Upon the door of his room being opened, he was found with a blanket thrown across his shoulders (in imitation of a Swiss peasant's costume) in bare legs and a nightcap, singing and gesticulating most violently before the looking-glass, which he had placed upon the floor with two candles in front of it. Means were at once taken to get him into bed. The basso-cook, who slept in the adjoining room, declared he knew well enough what remedies to adopt to render it unnecessary to send for a medical man. He forthwith took his patient in hand, and subjected him to the following extraordinary course of treatment.

Two large mustard poultices were applied to

the calves of his legs, and two to the soles of his feet; the nightcap being removed, a smooth shining scalp was presented to view—a sort of broad, bony uncultivated desert, with not the oasis of a single hair to break the monotony of the wide expanse. A large piece of brown paper, steeped in vinegar, and perforated with innumerable holes, was placed upon his crown and forehead; having completed his applications, Polonini, who apparently was as great an adept at pickling a baritone as he was in cooking macaroni, begged one of the bystanders to fetch a nail-brush! For what purpose such an article could be required at such a moment puzzled everyone who heard the request. Many nail-brushes were quickly brought, and our curiosity was gratified by one being used with great vigour upon the invalid's chest, which, as may be supposed, soon became inflamed by the friction. The lookers-on winced at the energetic efforts of the amateur doctor. Not so the baritone, upon whom the rubbing, or more properly the scrubbing, had at first but little effect. He continued "yodelling," as well as he could lying on

his back, and every now and then would make an attempt to bow to the audience he took us to be. At length the poultices beginning to tingle, the vinegar to cool his head, the smart pain inflicted by the brush gradually restored him to consciousness. He began to speak rationally, and to recognise those around him. Could he have seen the figure he presented, he might, I dare say, have relapsed from sheer fright into his former state. This danger was averted by the applications being removed. He improved daily, and soon became anxious to make his reappearance, having heard that it was contemplated by the Impresario to engage another baritone to supply his place. This idea nearly made him ill again. The fear of somebody else coming to imitate the "yodel," and to rob him of his laurels, haunted him night and day. He insisted upon being allowed to sing. His doctor, the basso, consented, stipulating that he should not attempt the Swiss song, or look at macaroni for a fortnight. He was announced to appear in his original character in "Linda di Chamounix." Would the galleries allow him to omit the famous "Fol-di-rai-ti?" Had they for-

gotten it?—not a bit. They would not even wait for the scene where it used to be introduced; but insisted upon his singing it the moment he came upon the stage. Excuses in dumb show were of no avail—the opera was not allowed to proceed without the song being sung, and sung it was with greater success than ever. Those who demanded it so vociferously little thought what an effect their applause had had upon the singer. How it had nearly turned his brain, and obliged him to submit to the violent remedies just described.

The medico-basso-cook, or cook-medico-basso —whichever may be the more correct form of expressing the different accomplishments so felicitously combined in the person of Polonini—accompanied the convalescent baritone to the theatre, and stood at the side-scenes to watch his reappearance before the footlights. Upon hearing the forbidden song demanded, his pantomime was most expressive of displeasure, should the baritone attempt to break his promise. But in vain. In vain he threatened; the galleries would have their way, and the cook-medico-basso or the

basso-medico-cook was disregarded. He had his revenge, however, in private, and kept his patient on low diet for a very much longer time than was necessary, as a punishment for his breach of promise with regard to the song.

The second opera at the Theatre Royal was "La Sonnambula," in which the *Tenore d'Utilità*, the faint-hearted Frenchman, made his *débût* before a Dublin audience.

The opera passed off much as usual, except the last act, when the tenor for a few seconds was in greater mental agony than he had ever in his life experienced. At least, so he assured us at supper. The cause was as follows. The Frenchman wore a wig, of which Amina was either not aware, as she declared, or forgot it. In the last scene, when the somnambulist awakes from her trance, she rushed up to Elvino, and to convince herself of his reality passed her hands over his face and shoulders. It is a conventional bit of stage business, in which all Aminas indulge. In this instance, however, the stage business was a little too effective. Amina in her "*gioia*," and eager inquiries, "*Sei tu?*" "*Ah, m'abbraccia, Elvino!*"

put her hands upon Elvino's head, and drew his wig down over his eyes. He turned instinctively from the audience to settle himself, and although the house took no notice of the accident, it made him so unwell that he felt even worse, he said, than when at sea. It might have been a serious matter for the *débutant*, as the galleries would assuredly not have forgotten the point whenever he appeared before them. Our *Tenore d'Utilità*, would as surely have been christened "Wigs," in allusion to the incident, as Brizzi was called "Breeches," and Herr Damke "Donkey." A nickname on the stage is as completely identified with its owner as it is inseparable from an individual when happily applied in social life, and is often as fatal to success in the one case as in the other.

The operas given during the fortnight's stay of the party in Dublin were ten in number. Most of these were performed after one rehearsal, a remarkable proof of the musical intelligence of the band and chorus, who, although they had been practising under the direction of Mr. Levey some time before, had only these opportunities

of rehearsing the different operas with the principal singers.

The Dublin Theatre Royal can boast of some very remarkable musical associations. Madame Viardot has there performed more *rôles* in her varied *répertoire* than elsewhere. During one "Italian season" of a fortnight she played Orfeo, Azucena, Nancy, Orsini, Maddalena, Zerlina, and Lady Macbeth,—the last one of her very finest impersonations, which, for some unaccountable reason, has never been seen in London or Paris.

The "Trovatore" and "Don Giovanni" have been given in Dublin with stronger "casts" than ever known in any other capital, the principal parts being sustained by Grisi, Gassier, Alboni, Mario, Ciampi and Graziani. It was in Dublin that Mario met with his first great success in 1842, and there sang all Rubini's *répertoire;* after which, he returned to Paris, and appeared in the same characters with the same result.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Our tourists, having concluded their particular series of Italian operas in Dublin, prepared to go on to Cork, where, according to the newspapers, "the enterprising manager of the Theatre Royal, Dublin, had arranged to give three operatic performances, supported by the most distinguished artists."

Compared with the ease and luxury they had enjoyed since their arrival in Ireland, this journey entailed great labour and trouble upon the party. It was with no little consternation they learned that the train started early, and that they must be up and about by eight o'clock in the morning, an hour apparently before unheard of by some of the travellers. They retired to rest sooner than usual the night previous, in order to prepare for such exertion.

The hotel was astir betimes. At seven o'clock

the bustle of departure commenced, and increased to an alarming pitch until the last cab, carrying the Impresario and conductor, with Mike on the box, drove off to the railway station. The basso-medico-cook was the first to come down to breakfast. He had undertaken to call the others, and before doing so, fortified himself against all emergencies by making a hearty meal, undisturbed by any intruders. This done, he proceeded to fulfil his promise, and to pull the more sleepy of his companions out of bed. His patient, the baritone, he helped to dress, as well as to drink a cup of chocolate which had been clandestinely brought into the room by Mike, whose admiration of the "yodel" was unbounded. The basso-medico-cook declared chocolate contrary to his *régime*, and likely to necessitate another course of brown paper and mustard poultices.

One by one the tourists assembled at the breakfast-table, all more or less sleepy. Alfonso was the only talker of the party. He was as cheerful as though early rising was his great delight, and a treat of unusual occurrence. Amina's mother did not altogether appreciate his

facetiousness, but was, nevertheless, obliged to laugh outright at some of his jokes, all more or less of a practical nature, and certainly not admitting of repetition. It was perhaps for this reason that she made an observation, the only one she had ventured for some days, to the effect that there was a time for all things, and that now they should all be eating their breakfasts instead of talking and playing the fool—a remark to which Graziani replied by offering the good old lady another chop and half-a-dozen eggs.

Lucrezia made her appearance when the others had nearly finished breakfast. She evidently did not approve of being disturbed at such an hour; not that she was decidedly out of humour, but in that frame of mind when apparently the slightest accident would have made her so. At such a moment, it is desirable for the enterprising Impresario (if he be travelling with the party) to keep out of the way. His presence might have an irritating influence upon his prima donna, he being looked upon as the sole cause of all the inconveniences and annoyances. It is for his benefit alone that all the trouble is incurred: he

it is who arranges the departure of the train at such an unreasonable hour; he is also to blame if the waiters are not prompt in their attention; and it is his fault, and none other's, if the eggs are boiled too hard. Yes, my dear friend, for your own peace of mind and the tranquillity of everybody concerned, it is better you should avoid meeting Lucrezia under such circumstances. Leave her alone, and she will eat her breakfast quietly, and be herself again by twelve o'clock.

Mario was, of course, the last to appear. As usual, he had given himself so many minutes to dress, so many to take a cup of tea, and had timed the distance from the hotel to the railway station with the greatest nicety. He came into the room for his cup of tea in that delightfully *nonchalant* manner so peculiarly his own, when everybody else was ready to start, and sat down to table with his watch before him, determined not to be hurried. The party moved off in due order, and finally all reached the railway station. Here they were joined by the manager of the Theatre Royal and his body of retainers, consisting of choristers, musicians, scene-painters,

one or two trusty box-keepers, and his private secretary—the latter a very remarkable person and well deserving special notice.

The private secretary was of the gentler sex. Why theatrical managers generally employ female secretaries as they do, is a question which I have not been able to answer to my own satisfaction. The one in this instance was middle-aged, or rather, as Voltaire says, "*Une dame d'un certain age, dont il n'y a rien de plus incertain.*" From her appearance she might, in her youth, have been some theatrical property or pantomime trick, which the manager had made serviceable when no longer useful upon the stage. Her occupation during the day (at least, I believe she was never known to do anything else) was to count the checks and receipts of the night before. With what patience she used to tell up those metal counters and pile them into so many little hillocks along the manager's table! At night she wandered about the house, as gaoler of the private boxes, the keys of which used to hang in a tremendous bunch from her waist, and rattle fearfully. She was an important personage, that private secretary, on an opera

night, when she had it in her power to pass you on to the stage to have a look at the Italians—at least so thought, I dare say, many a young theatre-going Hibernian, who fostered a hopeless passion for the prima donna of his choice. The secretary, Mrs. Byrne, and the lady in the refreshment room, Mrs. Barry, the widow of an old stager who the wicked wits used to say was dead and "*barried*," and whose portrait in his coffin was worn in a reversible brooch by his disconsolate relict, were the guardian angels of the Theatre Royal at the time I speak of.

At the railway station the secretary seemed as if she missed her daily checks, or rather the counting them; for she had brought them with her. They were in a tin box, which the guardian angel watched most carefully. It might have contained so many gold coins, such was the attention with which she looked after it.

There was a great crowd and terrible confusion at the railway. The prima donna's prodigious trunks of the usual continental dimensions, the cases containing the theatrical dresses, numerous stage properties and choice bits of

scenery not to be found in Cork, and which seemed to be ashamed to be seen by daylight, to say nothing of the double-basses and other trifles, were the cause of a vast amount of growling by the porters.

A compartment, or rather a whole carriage, was secured for our tourists, who had provided themselves with draughtboards, chessmen, a pack of cards, and books, to pass the time away. The last bell was rung, every one took his place, the train moved slowly out of the station.

As Mario sat opposite to the Impresario in the railway carriage, he looked like the portrait of a Spaniard by Velasquez—perhaps a handsomer Spaniard than Velasquez ever painted or imagined. He was carelessly dressed, although very characteristically so. A slouch hat, loose neckerchief, frilled shirt, a shooting-jacket, and trousers to match, formed his costume. The only traces of coquetry in his attire were the high-heeled boots, the wearing of which seems to have become a positive necessity to him.

On or off the stage, Mario is the *beau idéal* of a romantic tenor, although in private life I never

knew any singer of eminence so little mindful of his vocal powers. You might converse with him for hours, or be with him for weeks together, and never suspect him of any remarkable proficiency in the art. He will converse with you, and talk well about politics, painting (in which he is an adept), history, in short on any subject but music, of which nevertheless he has good knowledge, being a first-rate authority on musical antiquarian lore.

He has spent large sums in collecting books, ancient and modern, connected with the art, books that he has not only collected, but studied. His library and collection of musical relics are very valuable and complete.

"It is strange," said the Impresario, addressing Mario, "that no memoir has been written of you."

"You are very kind," replied Mario, "but fortunately for me, the moment has not yet come when it is necessary a memoir should be written, if it ever will be required to know anything of so humble an individual as myself."

"Memoirs are often written during the lifetime

of the subject, I believe," said the Impresario, "and I am sure the details of your career would be very interesting to a great many."

"My life has been devoid of any stirring incidents to make it so," replied Mario. "It is told in a few words: I was born," he continued, "at Cagliari, in Sardinia. My father was the Marchese di Candia. I was sent to the Military Academy, where Cavour was one of my fellow-students. I served in the army seven years. I was aide-de-camp to my father at Nice, where he had been appointed Governor. At that time the Duchesse de Berri made her expedition to the south of France, and I visited her on board the steamer in which she was concealed. When at Genoa, with my regiment, the *Chasseurs de la Garde*, I was suspected of associating with those who were politically opposed to the Government, and was in consequence deputed to carry despatches to Sardinia. This being evidently a pretext to get rid of me, I protested, and was anxious to appeal to the king, Carlo Alberto, against what I considered an indignity put upon me. However, the Marchese Paolucci showed me

the general order, and the note affixed to it, according to which, if the lieutenant objected to the duty, he was to consider himself at the disposal of the General in command—equivalent in fact to my being placed under arrest. In spite of the advice of my good friend the Marquis, I sent in my papers to the authorities, and decided to embark for Spain. It being some time before the preparations for my departure could be made, I had to conceal myself in Genoa, which, thanks to the assistance of a young lady to whom I was much attached, I successfully accomplished for a month. At the expiration of that time, I took passage on board a boat bound for Marseilles, intending to proceed thence to Spain, and I remember we were seventeen days at sea in a fishing-smack. On arriving at Marseilles, and making myself known to the authorities, I was received with the greatest hospitality, and strongly advised not to continue my journey as I intended, but to make my way to Paris; which advice I followed. I remained in Paris but a short time, and was persuaded to join a party going to London. Being well acquainted

with Admiral Fielding's family, through them I was introduced to the Duke of Wellington. Still anxious to visit Spain, I asked the Duke to give me some facility for so doing. He assured me it was a country in which I should make no progress—that the more energy I displayed, the more enemies I should make; and that the only thing I could hope for there with any certainty, was a *coup de fusil.* He concluded his advice by telling me '*Amusez vous, et je ferai quelque chose pour vous plus tard.*' This counsel I followed to such good purpose that time passed away, and with it all my money, until at last I found myself without any means of support, my father refusing to make me any allowance. I then resolved to go to America, and secured a cabin on board a sailing-vessel starting from the Thames, having, with some difficulty, managed to scrape together forty pounds to pay for the passage. A week before the ship was to leave, I fell ill—I had to abandon the idea of going to America, and what was worse, to forfeit the forty pounds. During this illness, I experienced the *profondeur* of English hospitality, and was treated

like a brother by those with whom I had the good luck to have become acquainted. I was urged to go to Paris to consult the doctors, and was taken there by one of my English friends in his travelling-carriage.

"In Paris I improved in health, and made the acquaintance of the Marquis Aguado, then the director of the two theatres: the Opera, and the Théâtre des Italiens. I was also intimate with the Prince Belgiojoso, with whom I used to sing duets *en amateur*. My financial circumstances, however, became so serious, that I made them known to the Prince, who insisted upon my turning my vocal abilities to account. This was at first very obnoxious to me. I had looked forward to a very different career from that of an artist, which I then thought unmanly and unsuited to my tastes. But the Prince would not listen to my objections, assuring me that were it not for family considerations, he would, in spite of his social position, go himself upon the stage.

"He spoke to the Marquis Aguado on my behalf, and obtained for me an engagement for three years. For the first year, which was to be

passed in study, I received 14,000 francs, for the second 32,000, and for the third 45,000 francs.

"For the first six months, I was placed under the tuition of Meyerbeer, whom I daily visited. No composer that ever lived took such pains with his work as Meyerbeer—and of this I had frequent opportunities of judging while studying with him.

"I made my first appearance in Paris on December 1, 1838, in 'Robert le Diable,' at the Grand Opera. I sang there two years and a-half, and played in the 'Comte Ory,' 'Le Drapier,' and other operas. In 1840, Aguado made me sing at the 'Italiens,' where I appeared in 'L'Elisire d'Amore.' I really forget whether it was in 1839 or 1840 that I came out in London at Her Majesty's, in 'Lucrezia Borgia,' with Giulia Grisi; but it was about that time. I was not considered a success at any rate; and, in fact, my career did not begin until 1842, when I sang in Dublin with Tamburini, Grisi, and Lablache, and with Benedict as conductor. After that I returned to Paris, and sang the Rubini *répertoire*, in which I was most fortunate. Since then my life has passed but too rapidly

in going from Paris to London every season, and meeting always with the greatest kindness everywhere. In the winter of 1849, I went for the first time to Russia, and in 1854 to America. London and Paris, however, have been the two cities of which I shall always have the most pleasant recollections, unless it be Dublin, where I first received the greatest encouragement. Strange to say, I have never sung in Italy."

"A most interesting account," said Benedict, who had been listening attentively to the story.

Mario proceeded to re-light his cigar, which had gone out in the progress of the narrative.

"I can remember the time of your first visit to London," said Benedict to Mario, "when the handsome young Italian nobleman, with his exquisite tenor voice, was the idol of all the London *salons*. It was shortly after the production of my first English opera, the 'Gipsy's Warning.'"

"When was that given?" asked the Impresario.

"When Van Amburgh's Lions were roaring at Drury Lane," said Benedict; "the most attractive

afterpiece, as Bunn used to say, that a composer could ever wish for."

"How did you become acquainted with the famous poet?" asked the Impresario.

"Thereby hangs a tale," replied Benedict; "and it would take up too much of your time, perhaps, to listen to it."

"Oh! let us hear it," said Mario.

"I left my home and my position in Naples owing to Malibran, and to follow that erratic star. The last time she sang at St. Carlo, in 1834, she said, '*Au revoir à Londres*, and mind you must come.' She declared that my talent was wasted in Naples, and that she owed me reparation for all the trouble she had caused me, alluding to the following circumstance:—she had achieved an immense success in 'Norma,' and one very distinguished French lady, la Marquise Lagrange, living in a splendid hotel in the Riviera di Chiaja, and my great patroness, expressed a desire to make Malibran's acquaintance. On communicating this wish to the eminent prima donna, she exclaimed in her usually impulsive way, 'I will dine with her the day after

to-morrow!' forgetting she was to sing 'Semiramide' that evening. Of course the dinner which had been arranged could not come off, and was postponed for a week. On the day fixed for the feast—the dinner hour being six o'clock—when I arrived the guests were assembled, the only one not present being Malibran herself. Time passed: the hostess became impatient, and after waiting a full hour we sat down to table without the guest for whom the entertainment was really given. I was looked upon as the cause of the disappointment. I explained my innocence, and assured every one that illness alone could have prevented Malibran from coming; on saying which I was answered by a gentleman just arrived from the Teatro del Fondo, who declared he had seen Malibran a quarter of an hour before in a private box. This shut me up completely, and I took my departure with a firm resolution to lecture my talented friend for her heedless conduct. It was nearly eleven o'clock when I saw her at her hotel, just returned from the theatre, in the greatest spirits.

"'What have you done?' I exclaimed. 'How could you behave so foolishly?'

"'Done!' she replied. 'I went to see Madame Duprez' *début* in Ricci's "Colonello;" dressed her myself, and made the public applaud her.'

"'And Madame Lagrange?' said I.

"'What of her?' asked Malibran.

"'And the twice postponed dinner! And your promise to be exact!'

"'Can it be? Is it possible?' she said, clasping her hands. 'It was surely to-morrow that the dinner was to be!'

"Immediately recollecting that she had made a mistake, she insisted upon going to see the Marchioness. I observed that every one would be in bed, but she would not be pacified, and made ready to start. It was past twelve o'clock when we arrived at the Hotel Lagrange, which was closed for the night. After ringing some time, the sleepy porter made his appearance, saying that every one had retired to rest, and that nobody could be admitted. Nothing daunted, Malibran made me wait in the courtyard while she

rushed up, in spite of all remonstrances, into the private apartments of the Marchioness. There awakening her by kissing her hand, and kneeling at her bedside, she implored forgiveness, and to such effect, that the supposed neglect was forthwith pardoned, and the two *grandes dames du monde et de l'art* became from that hour inseparable companions. This was one of the many instances where, by her impulsive nature, Malibran brought her very best friends into difficulties, and one of the few where she was able and willing to extricate them from their disagreeable position.

"I received a letter," continued Benedict, "in the spring of 1835, telling me that my name was announced in De Beriot's concert on June 22nd of that year in London. Malibran wrote as well to my wife, saying that no excuse would be taken, and that I must come. Accordingly I started, and reached London on June 15, 1835. On the very evening of my arrival, I had to accompany her at a private concert. On June 22nd, the day of my London *début*, Grisi and Malibran sang together for the first time in the

duet from Mercadante's opera 'Andronico.' The success of that concert in Her Majesty's Theatre was unparalleled, and of course the duet between the two rivals in the prime of youth and beauty created an immense sensation. A great desire having been expressed for a second performance of the duet, Malibran and De Beriot asked me whether I would give a concert during July. Feeling that I was quite unknown in London, I hesitated, when Malibran asked me if I would be contented with a profit of eighty pounds, without any risk, which she would take upon herself. I at length yielded to her arguments, although very reluctantly, fearing that she would be a heavy loser by this generous arrangement. At Malibran's request, Grisi consented to repeat the duet. The concert was given on 15th July, 1835, and the profits exceeded £300. This was the commencement of my annual concerts. I was of course overjoyed at the result; but my surprise was increased when, on arriving in Paris a month afterwards, Troupenas, my publisher and Malibran's great friend, informed me that he had 5000 francs at my disposal, Malibran having

given him her share of the concert to hand to me. On the evening after the concert in London, she invited me to a large party at Eagle Lodge, Brompton, where she introduced me to her enterprising Impresario, Alfred Bunn, and where it was agreed that the next opera for Drury Lane, after Balfe's 'Maid of Artois,' was to be composed by me and her husband, De Beriot. Her untimely death in 1836 prevented this plan being carried out, but Alfred Bunn considered himself bound by his promise to Malibran, and produced my 'Gipsy's Warning' in 1838."

"During the time you have been in this country," said the Impresario to Benedict, "do you think any great change is observable in the social position of musical professors?"

"A most decided improvement has taken place in that respect," replied Benedict. "It was formerly the custom not to listen to a single note at any of the fashionable *réunions*, and owing to the noise of conversation and of people moving about —there being no seats provided—the singers and instrumental performers could with difficulty hear themselves. Lablache once told me that a Mr.

Gosikow, a performer on the Jew's harp, playing at one of the fashionable private concerts, produced the greatest sensation; a lady standing close to him, exclaiming, 'There is a man who plays on an instrument which cannot be heard.' A breathless silence followed; and while Grisi, Caradori Allen, Rubini, and Lablache had been singing in dumb show, Herr Gosikow, the performer on the inaudible instrument, carried away all the honours. The crowd was so great at the fashionable *soirées* of those days, that the guests used to sit on the pianoforte. To prevent this being done, or for other reasons, on one occasion the artists found themselves encircled, and isolated from the rest of the company by a silken cord. Malibran was of the concert party, and greatly offended by what she supposed was an insult to herself and *confrères*. Asking for a pair of scissors, in the presence of all assembled, she cut the silken cord, and removed the offending barrier.

My complete ignorance of English custom during the first year of my stay in London led to endless mistakes. Thus I was shocked at the abbreviation of *Miss*, used when addressing a lady, and

always corrected the supposed error by directing all my letters to *Mistress* So and So. Nor would I, in my extreme modesty, ever take wine when invited to do so at table, but always refused, much, I dare say, to the surprise of those who paid me the compliment. To show my dignity as an artist, when a card with '*At home*' upon it was left at my lodgings, I complained to my wife of the want of the civility of the proud ladies of this kingdom, who, apparently neglecting the conventional form of 'requesting the pleasure of my company,' put a slight upon me, and treated me like a servant. In fashionable circles, artists of any distinction are now received with the greatest courtesy, and their performances listened to with attention, it being no longer *à la mode* to ignore a taste for music. There were, however, at the time of my first visit to England some distinguished amateurs, who loved music for its own sake, and encouraged the art and artists when and wherever they could do so. Amongst those whom I remember with the greatest gratitude were the Earl of Westmoreland, Lord Falmouth, the late Duke of Cambridge, Sir Andrew Barnard, and

others, who, in their social position, gave the art encouragement and a great impetus to its advancement in their particular sphere of life."

"You have told us," said the Impresario addressing Mario, "the lowest sum you received in your professional career. Would it be an indiscreet question to ask what is the average income of a *primo tenore*, according to your experience?"

"Taking one year with another," replied Mario, "I should say I have made about £10,000 a year since the Aguado engagement. London," he continued, calculating, "£3500, concerts £1500, *tournée*, £2000; then the winter engagement in Paris or Russia, £4000; yes, about £10,000 a year."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Two or three hours had now elapsed since leaving Dublin, and anxiety was evinced by the party generally as to where they would lunch or dine. No satisfactory information could be obtained on the subject, until the cook-medico-basso, who had taken a carriage for himself and his patient, the baritone, in answer to inquiry, passed word that he, in his capacity of purveyor to the party, had foreseen the necessity for refreshment on the road, and brought an ample store of provisions. He confirmed his statement by holding forth a roast fowl and a mysterious paper bag out of the window. This prudence met with great approbation, particularly from Amina's mamma, who twirled her thumbs and smiled happily, declaring the basso to be the most good-natured fellow in the world. She had had a better view of the fowl and the

mysterious bag, as they were held forth, than the rest of the party.

All fear of starvation being thus removed, various games were commenced among the travellers. Gennaro set up his railway chess-board, and challenged Alfonso to a trial of skill, in which neither exhibited any very great prowess, although both were serious enough over the contest. The game lasted until it was disturbed by the fowl and mysterious bag being thrust in at the window by means of a stick. The fowl was forthwith divided among the three ladies and Gennaro, who brought from the recesses of a handsome travelling-bag all the requirements of a dining table as far as regarded knife, fork, spoon, salt-box, and a drinking cup.

The mysterious bag was opened, and found to contain the remains of what had once been a well-looking pigeon pasty, but was now an indescribable mass of jelly and pie crust.

A request was passed to Polonini for some wine, whereupon the provident caterer handed out a bottle of claret, of which Amina's mamma took charge, and distributed in cupfuls to the others.

The luncheon, notwithstanding the primitive mode in which it had been served, passed off well, and put everybody into good humour. "Mamma" declared she had enjoyed it immensely, and in fact, could not be persuaded to leave her chicken bones, which she took up a second time, having had a very good share of the pigeon pie between whiles. At length everything was consumed, and nothing left of what the basso had provided, except the greasy bag and the empty claret bottle. These were handed back to him in token of how his provisions had been appreciated.

Eating being over, chess was resumed, and lasted until the players were tired out, and took to smoking instead.

It was 4 p.m. when the party arrived in Cork. At half-past four they were all busily engaged at dinner. Many lamented the macaroni and delicacies of the great basso cook, who not being upon the free list of the Imperial Hotel kitchen, was unable to indulge his remarkable talents in the culinary art; but they managed, nevertheless, almost without exception, to find consolation in the more simple fare provided for them. The

much-abused saddle of mutton and boiled fowls bore testimony to the philosophy with which the deprivation was endured. "*Que je déteste la cuisine Anglaise,*" muttered the Frenchman, as he passed his plate to the carver for the third time, thereby proving what complete self-control he had attained, and how he could appear to enjoy that which he said was so thoroughly distasteful to him. For my own part, judging from the manner in which he devoured the mutton, I should never have suspected that he had any objection to *la cuisine Anglaise.*

After a few hurried mouthfuls, the Impresario of the party left the table, and hastened to the theatre to see what preparations had been made for the performance which was to be given that evening. He was joined on the way by his partner, the Dublin manager. The preparations they found were not, indeed, very promising. The theatre itself was in a most dilapidated state. Round a large heap of bricks and mortar, in the middle of the stage, lay scattered in terrible confusion, the huge boxes and scenery which had been brought from Dublin. The double bass,

rising majestically in the back ground, seemed to contemplate the disorder of its *compagnons de voyage* with stoical indifference. Upon the top of the bricks and mortar the proprietor of the theatre was to be seen in his shirt sleeves, shouting to a solitary labourer, who was employed at hammering at something in the pit. The house itself (formerly, I believe, a handsome building,) had been almost entirely destroyed by fire, and, in consequence, for some time, altogether abandoned. The ruins and four walls were rented by the present lessee, and by his own exertions and the assistance of a few hard-working friends (represented by the labourer in the pit), the house was so far restored as to be just available for dramatic performances—that is to say, there was a stage, and there were divisions in the house before the curtain, which to a certain extent corresponded to boxes, galleries, and pit; but it required a considerable stretch of good nature on the part of the audience as well as of the performers, to put up with the inconveniences of theatricals in such a place. The practical lessee, upon seeing our enterprising Impresario, ceased haranguing his friend in the pit,

and descended from his elevated position. He apologised for appearing in working costume, and offered to show the new comers over the building. They accordingly proceeded to make a survey.

The lessee had made but little preparation to accommodate the "power of people" he said were to fill the theatre in the evening.

The arrangements for the artists behind the curtain were equally deficient. There were no dressing-rooms fit to be entered; no windows mended since the fire; in short, everything was in strict keeping with the heap of bricks and mortar upon the stage, which afforded a very good criterion of the preparations the lessee had made for the Italian operas. At the suggestion of the Impresario, and remonstrance of the Dublin manager, several men were called in, who were set to clear the stage. By the aid of wheelbarrows and baskets, the bricks and mortar were removed. A glazier was sent for, to mend the windows in the dressing-room intended for the *prima donna*, while all the loiterers about the theatre were pressed into service, either as *impromptu* carpenters, scene-shifters, or in some other useful capacity.

In a short time, the place assumed a cleanly and more encouraging appearance. The scenery was certainly not of the most illusive character, but it promised to answer the purpose. "Lucrezia Borgia," "Don Pasquale," and "Norma," were the operas to be given, and these did not require any great scenic display. Moreover, the practical lessee argued that the music and singers were the great attraction, and so long as Grisi and Mario sang in the operas announced, it did not signify what seats the public had to sit upon, or what scenery they had to look at,—they would be sure to come. And this argument proved correct; for our Impresario and the Dublin manager had barely succeeded in getting the stage into something like order, when the theatre began to fill with "the power of people" the lessee had predicted. Long before the hour of commencement, every seat was occupied, and the dingy-looking house crowded to overflowing by a most brilliant and well-dressed audience.

When the artists arrived from the hotel, they were not a little astonished at the nooks and corners in which they had to dress. There

had been no rehearsal necessary. The band and chorus, having been selected from those of the Dublin company, were already acquainted with the operas; none of the performers, therefore, had had occasion to visit the theatre previously.

The dressing-room allotted to the tenor was a small recess on the first floor, the stairs to which had not been restored since the fire. For these, an ordinary ladder had been substituted, to climb which gave Gennaro considerable trouble, and was, moreover, rather a dangerous undertaking, owing to his high heels. One of the proscenium private boxes had been covered in, and appropriated to the uses of the baritone and basso, Alfonso and Gubetta; and for Orsini, a sort of "loose box" had been extemporised at the back of the stage by means of some deal boards and strips of calico. The *prima donna* had, of course, the best accommodation,—a small room with a sheet over the entrance to do service for a door. There were but few objections to the impromptu dressing-rooms, all the party knowing and making allowances for the difficulties there had been to overcome in

giving Italian operas in a half-burnt-down theatre. The chorus, I believe, dressed under the stage: they came and went up and down a trap-door mysteriously.

That subscenic region must have been a frosty place, for the conductor complained that, as he sat in the orchestra, a bitterly cold wind cut his legs, while the heated atmosphere of the theatre made the upper part of his body uncomfortably warm.

The overture to "Lucrezia Borgia" at length commenced, and the moment came for the curtain to be raised. Before this could be done, Gennaro must be in his place upon the stage. But Gennaro, when wanted, was really *in statu(e) quo.* The ladder to his room had been inadvertently removed, and was now nowhere to be found.

There stood the handsome tenor in the opening in the wall of the stage, some ten or fifteen feet above the heads of his companions, utterly helpless, until some means could be contrived to remove him from his niche. The ladder was at last brought forth from between two side scenes, where it had been misplaced, and Mario descended just in time

to prevent the stage being kept waiting. He was received with acclamations by the audience, as also was Grisi when she appeared. Her *entrée* was a little less dignified than that of Gennaro, the duchess being drawn across the stage upon a hand-truck by a scene shifter in his shirt sleeves. The truck was meant to represent a Venetian gondola; there being no scenery to conceal this contrivance and the gondolier from public gaze, the effect was somewhat more surprising than illusive. The performances having been fairly started, in spite of all the many obstacles, it went on triumphantly. Grisi and Mario, in the zenith of their power, excited the audience to the greatest enthusiasm. They were recalled incessantly, yelled and whistled at after each act, according to the true Hibernian fashion, and cheered vociferously.

During the week, "Norma" and "Don Pasquale" were duly given as announced.

Norina, in the latter opera, had her temper sorely tried by the obtuseness of her waiting-maid, who was profoundly ignorant of any foreign language, and the prima donna leggiera being

almost equally unacquainted with the English tongue, a sad difficulty arose between them. Norina, just before going on the stage, wanted her gloves, and made signs to the maid, unmistakable, it would have been supposed, to any one of the commonest intelligence. The maid, however, failed altogether to understand her mistress, who then attempted to explain herself in a little broken English.

"Give me *glass*," she exclaimed. Whereupon the maid handed her a tumbler. That being rejected, she proffered a looking-glass. "My *glass*," reiterated the little lady, frantically holding up her hands; but it was of no use; the wooden-headed maid would not or could not comprehend that "*glass*" in this particular instance meant gloves, and Norina, in a flood of angry tears, had to appear before the public with uncovered hands.

She concealed her emotion admirably, and, in fact, evinced great talent for suddenly transforming her appearance from grave to gay. At the side scenes, when vainly demanding "glass," her countenance was indicative of the most abject

despair. The next moment she was saluting the audience most gracefully, radiant with the most fascinating smiles, and apparently in the enjoyment of a perfectly unruffled temper. At the termination of her aria, the gloves were produced by the wooden-headed maid, and the applause of a delighted public quickly effaced all recollections of the misunderstanding.

The last opera in Cork was "Norma," the principal part being, of course, played by our Diva. The Frenchman, as Pollio, made a very novel *coup de théâtre* in the trio scene. Being somewhat short-sighted, he always wore an eyeglass suspended from his neck, and concealed in the folds of his costume. On this occasion, however, it was brought into full view, and made use of in the most unexpected manner. The famous "*Trema o Vil*" was, as every one knows, always a very remarkable display of energy on the part of Grisi. It completely electrified the Frenchman. As the Diva approached him menacingly, he receded, until at last he was prevented going farther back by the proscenium. Standing there, either terrified or excited by the

marvellous reality of Norma's rage, in a moment of forgetfulness, he stuck his glass in his eye, either from sheer nervousness, or to have a better look at the infuriated priestess. Now a Roman of old may have been as subject to weak sight, as well as any unfortunate individual of the present day; but to Pollio, whose handsome appearance is supposed to have been the cause of Norma's misfortune, no such imperfection of vision had hitherto been attributed. The effect was strange, and might have been serious, had not the Diva possessed great self-control. Adelgisa turned aside, and indulged in a quiet laugh all to herself. Not so Norma, who had to go on with the stage business.

I have seen Oroveso come on the stage wearing the spectacles he had used at the side scenes to read his part. I have been myself "discovered" and exposed to the view of a crowded house; but I never knew any stage effect so comical, and so little expected, as that produced by Pollio's eyeglass.

A singular incident occurred in the same theatre during another performance of "Norma,"

more recent than the one in question. Cruvelli was the prima donna. It was a matter of difficulty to find two children to represent Norma's offspring. At length the carpenter of the theatre volunteered his two little daughters to perform the important parts. Their mother accordingly brought them to the theatre. They were dressed, and instructed how to conduct themselves upon the stage. Before the commencement of the second act, they were placed upon the couch in Norma's dwelling,—a railway rug, I remember, doing service for the skins of wild animals on which Norma is supposed to recline. Their parents talked to them long and seriously, petted and threatened them, to ensure their proper behaviour. There they lay in fear and trembling as the curtain drew up. The number of people in the house, the glare of the gas lamps, the applause and shouting of the audience, alarmed them. The mother and father at the side scenes enforced obedience to the commands already given by the most expressive gestures. The band played loudly, and Norma advanced to the footlights, giving vent to her feel-

ings in a violent recitative. Dagger in hand, she then rushed up to the couch. This proved too much for the children, already nearly frightened to death. They gave a shriek, tumbled off the couch, and toddled, as fast as their little legs could carry them, off the stage into their mother's arms. Cruvelli sat down for a few minutes on the railway rug to recover herself from the effect which the crisis had produced on her and the audience.

Our Diva had the children brought to her dressing-room, and ensured their good conduct by words of kindness and handfuls of sugar-plums, the latter a still more efficacious means. Had her follower taken the same precaution, the children would very likely have evinced more courage than they did.

CHAPTER XXV.

AFTER the three operas in Cork we returned to Dublin to give a last performance at the Theatre Royal, *en route* for Manchester. We reached Dublin about four P.M. on Saturday. At Morrisson's, Mike received the Impresario with all honour.

"You've had good luck, sir?" said Mike, inquiringly, while unpacking the manager's portmanteau.

"Very good indeed, Mike," replied the Impresario.

"And so have we here, sir," continued Mike; "we've had a mighty big wedding in the house, sir."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Impresario.

"It was so, sir," said Mike; "and a pretty expensive one too, sir. The trousers cost £20,000!"

"The trousers, Mike!" said the Impresario, amazed. "What trousers cost £20,000?"

"That's what puzzles me, sir," replied Mike. "I'd never have thought it, hadn't I read it with my own eyes in the papers."

The manager was puzzled too; but upon reflection thought he had solved the mystery.

"Are you sure it wasn't *trousseau*, Mike?" he asked.

"Faith then," said Mike, scratching his head, "whatever it was, it was written 'trousers,' or something very like it."

Mike was one of the kindest-hearted fellows in the world. Hearing that an old *habitué* who was staying in the hotel—one whom he had long served—had been unfortunate and lost all his money, Mike went to him, and with many apologies said, that "if a matter of forty pounds could be of any use, he had saved up that sum, and would gladly give it him." He would hear of no refusal, but left the bundle of one-pound notes on the dressing-table, and expressed great annoyance when it was returned to him increased in bulk by the addition of a few sovereigns.

The last night of "Norma" drew a tremendous house. The attraction of the opera was in a great measure, of course, attributable to the fact of Grisi and Mario being included in the cast. The opera itself, however, has become so familiar to the Dublin public as to be attractive upon its own merits, the music being identified with old associations.

Association would seem to be one of the chief elements of pleasure in music, as it is indeed of nearly all emotional enjoyment. The association of names, places, perfume, scenery, &c., contribute to a greater extent than we may be aware of, or are willing to acknowledge, to the sentiments they awaken within us. "There is a connection of ideas," says Locke, "wholly owing to chance or custom; ideas that in themselves are not all of kin, come to be so united in some men's minds, that it is very hard to separate them; they always keep in company, and the one no sooner at any time comes into the understanding but its associate appears with it; and if they are more than two which are thus united, the whole gang, always inseparable, show themselves

together." And a similar connection exists between external objects and the action of the mind, although the relation may be so subtile as to be often almost inappreciable. To association may certainly be attributed much of the delight afforded by emotional music; it being conceded that music is of two kinds, emotional and intellectual: the former, that which merely pleases without requiring any mental effort to appreciate it, as, for instance, a simple dance tune; the latter demanding study and attention, and being that in which melody is made subservient to harmony, counterpoint, and design. These are often confounded with each other; but no two branches of any art or science can be more distinct. They appear to bear the same relation to each other as landscape does to historical painting. Emotional music is more popular for a time than intellectual, but it is sooner forgotten. You will hear the "Guards' Waltz" or a melody by Balfe whistled in the streets for a few months, but up to the present moment no quartet by Beethoven has acquired any such distinction; the first are transient,

whilst the other, we may believe, will live for ever.

Association is the strongest claim emotional music can have upon the memory, or, in other words, it is remembered for the sake of the associations it recalls. And in this respect it may be doubted whether it be not stronger in its influence than the more elevated kind. For instance, what symphony, quartet, or contrapuntal work can have so magical an effect upon a multitude (I was about to say an individual) as the simple strains of "God save the Queen" or the "Marseillaise?"

It is not, however, to the music itself that the effect is to be attributed, but to the recollections with which it is identified—the latent feelings of the hearers not being aroused by melody, but by the occult force of association. To prove this, it is but necessary to imagine the effect of the same tunes upon one who hears them for the first time, and listens to them with no more interest than he would to any other music. His blood is not stirred at their sound; his eyes are not filled with tears; he does not fancy himself at the top of a

barricade fighting to the death in the cause of liberty. The music may please, it does not excite him. But what is the effect of the national airs upon a warm-hearted Englishman or a patriotic Frenchman?

A simple melody is dear to the emigrant for the memories it awakens of those he has left in the old country:—

> "The intrepid Swiss who guards a foreign shore,
> Condemned to climb his mountain cliffs no more;
> If chance he hears the song so sweetly wild
> Which on those cliffs his infant hours beguiled,
> Melts at the long-lost scenes that round him rise,
> And sinks a martyr to repentant sighs."—ROGERS.

The monotonous music of the Chinese has a fascination for the people of that nation certainly not to be accounted for by the charm of melody. They go mad at the sing-song of their minstrels and the sounding of the tomtom, simply from the associations with which those barbarous noises are connected.

Dramatic music, again, owes much of its effect to the power of association. The Benediction chorus in the "Huguenots," a grand combination of musical sounds, thrills us all the more by

reason of the supposed circumstances of those who sing it. Apart from its dramatic situation, it is not nearly so impressive; but wherever heard, it recalls to the memory all the interesting story of the opera. And yet another instance: Is not a melody considered vulgar or refined from its associations? The most beautiful melody sung about the streets soon loses its association with refinement, and becomes common-place.

By saying that emotional and intellectual music are distinct, I would not imply that melody is not a necessary constituent part of both. Neither would I depreciate the one in undue admiration of the other. In the former, however, melody, and melody alone, is the object of the composer, who attains his purpose if the music pleases at first hearing, and is sensational. In the other, the intention is far higher, and although melody may not with impunity be ignored, a plan is laid down, the development of which is the composer's great endeavour.

This distinction between emotional and intellectual music is as remarkable in songs and

ballads as it is in compositions of more importance. The songs of Schubert, for instance, are types of the intellectual; while the majority of fashionable English ballads are examples of the other kind. It is one of the greatest failings in the latter compositions, if such they may be called, that the same melody is used to express the different sentiments of the different verses without reference to the meaning of the text. There can be no stronger proof than this of the want of intellectuality in the music. And yet servile imitation in music is sensualism of even a lower order than that to which I have just referred. The imitation of birds singing; the description of a battle by sounds intended to imitate cannon and other warlike noises, far from being, as some suppose, a proof of intellectuality, shows generally a want of that power on the part of the composer.

"The glory of music," says a modern author, "is to be more intimately connected than any other art with the hidden soul, with the incognisable part of our minds, which it stirs into an activity that at once fills us with delight, and passes under-

standing. We feel a certain mental energy quickened within us; faint, far away suggestions, glimpses of another world, crowd upon the uttermost rim of consciousness, and we entertain through the long movements of a symphony the indefinable joy of those who wake from dreams in the fancied possession of a treasure—they wot not what."

If, however, the effects of good music, here so admirably described, are interrupted by the obtrusive imitations of individual sounds that give a tinge of vulgarity to the composition, we wake from the dream, "not in the fancied possession of we wot not what," but with a sense of annoyance at being disturbed in the delightful enjoyment of what the Germans are so fond of calling æsthetic pleasure, by commonplace associations. And yet it will be urged that there are many compositions considered classical, and therefore intellectual in the strictest sense, in which imitations abound. To this I would reply that in nearly all such works the imitations are idealised, and more suggestive than servile, as, for instance, in Rossini's overture to "Guillaume Tell," Beethoven's "Pastoral

Symphony"—the latter work, however, with all deference be it said, not being the most purely intellectual of that great master's compositions.

Imitation was the bane of musical composition at the beginning of the present century, and is the sensualism of the then flourishing florid school, which, indeed, could boast of but little intellectuality. It was considered the highest effort of art to imitate the cries of animals, the wind, a storm, and other natural sounds. This has now, however, been almost lost sight of in striving to create melody that shall be sensational, if not lasting—such, in short, as is found in dance-music and our ballad operas.

That music is of the two kinds I have attempted to define, and that when intellectual it is the result of mental power of the very highest order, is now, I believe, universally acknowledged.

Musical composers, when deserving the designation, are recognised as men of intellect. There can be no more convincing proof of the rise of music in the opinion of that class which used formerly to condemn it as effeminate and puerile, than the constant reference to the art

and its followers by all writers of the present day.

A taste for music may no longer be said to indicate mental decadence, as wrote an eminent novelist some twenty years ago. Lord Chesterfield's advice as regards a fiddler is not listened to; even a Dr. Johnson of the present day would hardly dare to confess his antipathy to music; but whether we take up the last Christmas tale, or the latest work on metaphysics, we are almost sure to find some flattering allusion to the art, and often, as in one author, have occasion to remark that the practice of music is made to serve for many of the happiest illustrations.

The opera of "Norma," the performance of which suggested these observations, contains some of the most essentially emotional music of the modern Italian school. It is melodious throughout, and the melodies are apparently well adapted to the different situations of the drama. No other music could, according to our present notions, more adequately express the feelings of the *dramatis personæ*. The music will not, however,

last. It is even now past its bloom, and in twenty or thirty years will probably have faded altogether, and most likely be then deemed old-fashioned—rococo. A newer style of musical expression, or of emotional music, will have come into vogue, which probably may be more sensational, or, perhaps, a musical millennium will have arrived, and intellectual music become predominant.

By some it may be said that the music I have designated emotional has more beauty and charm for them than any other. I would not for one moment deny its merit, when it is the production of true genius, such as Bellini, Balfe, Benedict, Verdi, and others. It is, nevertheless, of a lower order, and has a crowd of imitators who, with just sufficient talent to put a few notes together, pick out chords upon the pianoforte or some other instrument, and degrade the art by productions which are no more deserving the name of compositions than colouring photographs deserves, intellectually speaking, to be called painting. It is consoling to think that the butterflies, to which these grubs in art give birth, are but

ephemeral in their nature, and pass away into oblivion almost as soon as they see daylight. As I have said before, talent for music is one of our commonest attributes—musical genius the rarest. Even study and perseverance, without "the gift," are but of little avail, as far as either emotional or intellectual compositions are concerned.

Speaking of the rise of music in this country, it strikes me as singular and worthy of remark that, whereas nearly all our old songs and ditties have, in a measure, some reference to pastoral pursuits, music is more or less neglected in the rural districts; whilst the great encouragement it meets with comes from the manufacturing counties. In Devonshire, for instance, music is at the lowest ebb; in Lancashire, it flourishes with greater vigour than perhaps in any other part of Europe. The musical festivals are a corroboration of the fact. No receipts so large as those taken at Birmingham; none so small as those at Hereford. Norwich offers no exception to the rule. It may be said that the larger population of Birmingham and the surrounding neighbourhood accounts for the difference as far as regards

money. It is, however, indisputable that music just now is not so generally cultivated among our agricultural, as it is by our manufacturing classes. Formerly the reverse was the case. The many and efficient musical societies, professional and amateur, to be met with in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and the rarity of such bodies of musicians in the south and other agricultural districts of England, prove the truth of what has been advanced. It would seem as though the breath of melody had forsaken "the waving corn and the bending trees" for what one would imagine to be the far less congenial atmosphere of chimney-pots and pantiles.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"You must not wear that white hat in Dublin," said the Impresario to Santi, a secondo tenore, the dandy *par excellence* of the party. The white hat had been bought expressly for the tour, and was intended to produce a great effect. It excited the envy of more than one of the baritones and basses, who determined among themselves that it should be put down. They made the Impresario join the conspiracy.

"Why not?" asked the dapper little tenor, who was strutting about the hall of the hotel in all the pride and glory of a spick-and-span new suit of clothes.

"Because it is against the laws of this country," replied the treacherous manager.

"What are the barbarous laws to me? I shall wear what I please," replied the foreign coxcomb.

"Of course you can," said his tormentor; "but do not blame me if the consequences of your obstinacy should be disagreeable. Bear in mind I warned you."

After this short conversation the tenor with one or two others went out to breathe the fresh air and show themselves in the Dublin streets.

They had not gone far when the tenor turned sharply round and complained he had been struck by a stone. His companions (one of whom was lurking behind for no other purpose than to pelt the persecuted tenor) assured him it was attributable to the white hat. Another stone from an unseen hand, and the tenor became alarmed. He suggested they should return to the hotel. On meeting the Impresario he related what had happened in the street, and expressed his surprise that a white hat should cause such excitement.

"I'm afraid you have not heard the last of it," remarked the manager.

The tenor went to his room, and following the advice of a deceitful baritone (one of the conspirators), put the hat carefully away, resolving that it should not again be worn in Ireland.

But his troubles were not yet over. A police constable was bribed by the practical jokers to aid them in their machinations.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the man, coming in as he had been told at dinner-time, and addressing the Impresario—"Beg pardon, but I am instructed to inquire whether one of your party wore a white hat in the streets this morning?"

The dandy tenor understood enough English to know the meaning of what was said. He turned pale, and was an easy prey.

"It was, I believe, one of us," said the manager, replying to the policeman.

"Very sorry, sir, but I must take that gentleman into custody."

The tenor became paler, and anxiously inquired whether no compromise could be effected. Negotiations were entered into, which ended in the white hat being confiscated and handed over to the policeman, who also received two pounds as hush-money from Santi, who was glad to be let off so easily. The hat was, I believe, through the interference of the Impresario, subsequently restored to its proper owner.

"Do you remember the 'Barbiere' we once had in Dublin, Donna Giulia?" said the Impresario at dessert, addressing the Diva.

"You mean the 'Barbiere,' when that wonderful basso played 'Basilio'?" replied Madame Grisi.

"Yes," answered the Impresario. "I almost forget what occurred, although I know we had great fun about it," he continued, evidently with the intention of "drawing out" the lady.

"There was no one to play 'Basilio,' and one of the company of the Theatre undertook the part," replied Donna Giulia.

"Yes, that was it," said the manager, "and he didn't learn it."

"It's a long time ago," replied the Diva. "I was the 'Rosina,' Mario 'Almaviva,' and Lablache 'Don Bartolo;' Costa was conducting. Lablache had been very ill that evening, with an impediment in his breathing. We had to wait some time for him between the acts. At the lesson-scene Don Basilio made his appearance, and evidently had forgotten every word he had to say. He began singing the most extraordinary

nonsense ever heard. The first thing I could make out was '*sarsaparilla*,' after which he mentioned every medicine he could think of, to make up the recitative. He then talked of 'Puritani,' 'La Sonnambula,' and all the operas, until he ended in making us laugh so immoderately that it was impossible to sing a note. Lablache stared at first, not knowing what to make of Don Basilio; at last he burst out laughing, and the exertion completely cured his breathing."

"And how did the scene terminate?" asked the Impresario.

"By Lablache putting his arms round Basilio's neck and walking him off the stage," replied Donna Giulia. "The last word Basilio said, I remember, was '*ipecacuanha*,' and that made us laugh more than ever."

"It was a most ludicrous affair," said the Impresario.

"It was, truly," replied Grisi; "had it occurred in a serious opera, I do not know what we should have done. As it was, it happened very well, and the public enjoyed the joke. I sat down from sheer exhaustion, and was hardly able to

sing Rode's air afterwards. What has become of that famous Don Basilio?"

"He died some time ago very suddenly, at Brighton," replied the Impresario.

"I met him there," said Donna Giulia, "one day when Mario and I were walking on the pier, and his appearance recalled all the amusement he had afforded us. He really extricated himself from a difficult position very cleverly."

"He was a clever fellow, and came of a clever family," said the Impresario.

"That's a capital story," said Benedict, who was sipping his coffee at the other end of the table.

"What is a capital story?" asked the Impresario.

"That which I have just heard," replied Benedict, referring to a friend who had been dining with us, and who sat next to him.

"Let us hear it," exclaimed Donna Giulia, whose curiosity was excited.

"I was only telling Benedict," said the stranger, "of a circumstance that happened last week at the Castle levée. There was a very

large attendance, and of course every one went in court suit.

"At the levée in question," continued the speaker, "a very tall and burly individual was seen struggling and pushing his way among the crowd. With great difficulty and much squeezing, he reached the door of the presence chamber, when a kind, good-natured friend whispered in his ear, 'Whisht! don't look, you've a hole in your stocking.' The communication had a horrible effect upon the unhappy courtier, whose legs were of a size in proportion to his bulky frame; stoop he durst not, turn round he could not, his only hope was the wall by which to conceal the accident he supposed had happened. Accordingly, he contrived to make his way to the wall, against which he turned his back, and in that position sidled down stairs again and bribed a lackey to get him a car. On reaching home he amazed his family by telling them he had not been presented, and explained the reason. They examined the silken casing of his legs with care. There was no hole —the perfect symmetry of his handsome calves was unimpaired by any such disaster. He was

the victim of a wicked hoax, and the court suit had been worn in vain."

Benedict enjoyed the story as much the second time of telling as he did the first. No one delights more thoroughly in an anecdote than the accomplished and amiable maestro.

"We must be getting ready," he said, at which warning those who were still at table rose, and prepared to go to the theatre. Mario had already left the party, and was reading the *Times* in his own room. Donna Giulia went to call him, and after the Diva had tried her voice and sung a few scales, they started together in their carriage for the Theatre Royal.

"Norma" excited the enthusiasm it always did with such a Pollio and such a Diva. At the end of the evening there was a great demonstration, of which Donna Giulia was the distinguished object. Such cheering and shouting to wish her "God speed," and a quick return to Dublin! The crowd followed the carriage home, where the excitement was renewed, and the good wishes resounded through the staircases and corridors of Morrison's Hotel. We had, comparatively speak-

ing, a quiet supper, every one was very tired with the journey and exertions of the day, and not sorry when the time came to get some rest.

"We start to-morrow evening by the seven o'clock boat," said Benedict.

"Would it not be better to dine at Salt Hill?" suggested the Impresario.

"Yes, that would be delightful," said one of the party.

"If all are agreeable, we will do so," continued the manager, "and I will send down and order dinner there at five o'clock."

This being arranged, "good-night" was said, and the tourists retired.

CHAPTER XXVII.

NEXT day, having to cross the water, many of the party were in great anxiety as to the weather. It was the subject of conversation all day. Don Alfonso declared he would give the zinc belt another chance. Fortini went to a doctor's shop to get some antidotes of his own concoction. Our friend the Swiss consulted his adviser the basso-medico-cook, as to the most prudent diet to be observed prior to a sea voyage, which Polonini declared was macaroni. 'Amina and her mother watched the smoke issuing from the chimneys of the houses opposite, and were horrified to see it ascending in a long straight line, there being really no wind to give it any other direction. This they argued was a bad sign, for if it was so calm on shore it would be windy out at sea; the ladies having apparently a vague notion that it must be always "*blowing* some where in the world."

During breakfast a note was brought to the Impresario by one of the waiters, who said the lady who had sent him was in the adjoining sitting-room. The manager obeyed the summons contained in the three-cornered billet, and followed the waiter.

Seated at a table near the window, in a green silk dress, with her bonnet and shawl on, was a pale looking lady, certainly past the early days of youth. The Impresario bowed, and on approaching the green silk dress, recognised the mysterious figure who was seen to get into the train at Euston Square, and who since that time had accompanied the party as silently and as constantly as its shadow. On every occasion when our primo tenore appeared, she had occupied a private box near the stage, or some prominent position in the theatre. And this not only during the present tour. She had heard every note he had sung in public for eight or nine years. Hers was indeed a strange infatuation. She was never known to speak to the object of her admiration except once, and that was when they met at a musical *soirée* in St. Petersburg. Even then nothing more than

the usual formalities of an introduction passed between them. She was a lady of fortune, and sensible enough except on one topic. Her friends remonstrated with her, and did all in their power to induce her to give up the wandering life she led. Their persuasions were of no avail. She declared that she interfered with no one, and had a right to spend her money as she liked; and so far she had reason on her side, whatever doubts her singular proceedings might in that respect give rise to. Orpheus never exercised a more potent spell than did the voice of our tenor upon this fascinated woman. She followed her enchanter to America and back again, to Russia, England and France, everywhere he sang, but if he retired to Italy for a short repose, then she gave up the pursuit, and waited until he should appear in public again. Her strange career was terminated by a sad accident. It was her custom to dress in the middle of the day for the opera in the evening. When making preparation to attend the first performance of "*Rigoletto*" in Paris, her dress caught fire, and she was very severely burnt. Grisi went frequently to make inquiries, and left Mario's card

with her. This she tied with a white ribbon round her neck. The injuries she had received were fatal. After lingering a few days in great agony she expired with the name of him whose voice she had loved with such infatuation clasped to her heart. The Paris papers gave a most romantic account of her life. One journal described a scene at her funeral, at which a rejected but devoted lover was said to have made himself remarkable by the wildest expressions of despair and grief. Whether such details were true, or merely intended for effect, I know not; at any rate, the short story I have told is no exaggeration. The lady had sent for the Impresario to inquire the destination of the tourists on leaving Dublin. The information was given with some reluctance on the part of the manager, who, however, knew from experience that if he declined complying with the request, the servants of the party would be bribed to tell. One of these, indeed, received large sums for the intelligence he had at different times given of the intended movements of the travellers. After a short conversation, the Impresario withdrew, leaving the lady in the green

silk dress, in order to join Benedict, who had been waiting for him.

"That is a very extraordinary life to lead," said the manager, addressing the maestro.

"Whose life do you mean?" asked Benedict.

"I have had an interview with the lady, who has been following us since we left London," replied the Impresario.

"Have you, indeed," exclaimed Benedict. "And what did she say?"

"Nothing particular; all she wanted to know was where we are going to next week. She was very polite, and is evidently a well-educated woman."

"Did you tell her?" asked Benedict.

"I did so—rather unwillingly, but had I not, she would have paid my servant or Mario's to find out," replied the manager.

"Certainly she would, as she has often done before," said Benedict. "Did she say whether she should continue to follow our footsteps?"

"No allusion was made to her intentions, nor was any one's name mentioned," replied the Impresario.

"She travels with her maid, I believe?" said Benedict.

"Yes, and appears to be very well off. She has the suite of rooms adjoining this."

"She must spend a fortune in travelling and private boxes," remarked Benedict.

"She must, indeed," replied the Impresario. "During the last long concert tour," he continued, "she never missed one concert, and always contrived to get two places for herself and maid in the very front row, no matter how crowded the rooms were. The green silk dress I have just seen, reminded me of her appearing in the same attire on the railway stations. Whatever time we started, she was always there, and generally wore the same colour, not very appropriate for the cold weather and early hours we had to put up with during the last tour."

"Have you seen Donna Giulia? she was inquiring for you just now," said Benedict.

"No, what was it she wanted?" answered the Impresario.

"She is very anxious about her letters being properly addressed at Liverpool."

"I gave her the name of the hotel yesterday; she has, perhaps, mislaid it," said the manager.

"That is hardly likely," remarked the maestro.

"She would be very unhappy if by any chance the letters were delayed a day. The post was only an hour late yesterday, and before it arrived she had telegraphed home to know how the children were, and why they had not written," said the Impresario, finishing his breakfast, which had been interrupted by the three-cornered billet.

"It was always so. How she was ever persuaded to go to America and leave her family behind, even for so short a time, always astonishes me," said Benedict.

"Had the Atlantic cable then been in working order, she would have spent all the money she received from Hackett in sending messages with 'the reply paid for,'" rejoined the manager.

"Very likely. Have you sent down to order dinner at Salt Hill? if not, we might go there, and have a stroll at Kingstown afterwards," suggested Benedict.

This proposal being accepted by the Impresario, it was agreed they should go by the one o'clock

train: after giving instructions to the servants of the party as to the hour of starting, packing up, &c., and having settled the hotel bill—a most important item in his undertaking—the manager sent to Benedict to say he was ready.

Donna Giulia obtained the information she required, and her mind was tranquillised by the assurance that there would be no interruption in the correspondence from home, but that the daily budget of letters would be awaiting her arrival at Liverpool.

"I never come to the sea-side," said Benedict, as the train, dashing along the shore of Dublin Bay, brought them near their destination, "but I think of that concert we gave at Ryde, with Alboni."

"When you went to bathe, and took the key of the concert room in your pocket," replied his companion.

"And I thought I left the key in the bathing machine. What a state of mind we were all in! It was a morning concert, and as soon as I arrived at Ryde, I went to try the pianoforte. The people gave me the key of the room, which I

inadvertently took away with me. Of course no one could unlock the door but myself, and when I came back to commence the concert, not thinking what I had done, I found the public and the rest of the party waiting to get into the room."

"What did you do, force the door?" asked the manager.

"No, I rushed to the bathing-place, but had to return without the key; some one in the mean time had got in at the window, so that the audience obtained admittance, and were already clamouring for the concert to commence. I afterwards discovered the key in the pocket of my surtout."

"A very primitive way of concert giving," remarked the manager, whose professional feelings were aroused by the story.

They alighted at Salt Hill and ordered dinner, as arranged. All the party met at Parry's hotel at five o'clock, and after a somewhat solemn meal, went on board the steamer lying at the jetty in Kingstown. The anticipations of the voyage effectually prevented any hilarity on the part of the tourists.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was a splendid night, but we appeared to be the victims of some impending sacrifice, as we wended our way along the pier towards the place where we were to embark. Many would probably have enjoyed the prospect of a sail, or rather a steam across the channel by moonlight, but I do not think any of our party appreciated the luxury, and all, I am quite sure, would willingly have forgone the pleasure had it been possible to reach Holyhead without crossing the water. The voyage was, however, very delightful—the sea as smooth as glass—very different from that we had experienced on a former occasion. The Diva paced the deck for a short time, but was at last induced to place herself in the care of the stewardess, in the event of accidents. Mario smoked innumerable cigars, and entered into conversation with the captain, who was unusually

communicative. He showed Gennaro the engine-room, and explained the various improvements that had lately been made in its vast machinery. A green silk dress was seen promenading the deck, but soon disappeared, and was altogether lost sight of until it came to light again in the Liverpool Theatre Royal.

"*Che bella notte!*" said Polonini, who was lying on the flat of his back, gazing at the stars.

"A fine night, but I would rather be on *terra firma*," replied the Swiss, who seemed to have a conviction that something unpleasant was always sure to happen at sea. He was not very wrong as far as he individually was concerned, for there's no doubt the water invariably made him very ill.

"*Est ce qu'il y a du danger?*" asked Amina of the Impresario, who was leaning over the side of the vessel, watching the fast fading lights of Howth and Kingstown.

Amina was assured there was nothing to fear, and seemed greatly relieved by the comforting intelligence.

Notwithstanding the smoothness of the sea, the

voyage had a certain levelling influence upon the tourists, who were remarkably silent and reserved as the boat was brought up alongside the pier at Holyhead.

We continued the route to Chester, where it had been arranged to break the journey. Benedict, however, left us, or, rather we left him, to go on to Liverpool.

After a short rest at Chester, we set out again early next day, and arrived at Birkenhead Ferry.

"A gentleman nearly drowned here this morning, sir," said a railway porter to the Impresario, whom he knew.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the latter.

"I think he belongs to your party," continued the porter.

On further inquiry it was learned that Benedict had fallen into the water between the landing stage and the steamer, having slipped off the plank communicating between the two. We were told he was saved by a miracle, for had the tide been flowing, he must have been lost. As it was, they hooked him out, and he had crossed over to Liverpool just before us. We hastened to the

Adelphi Hotel, and were glad to find our *maestro*, although looking very unhappy and remarkably uncomfortable in a suit of the landlord's clothes, many times too big for him, not much the worse for the dangerous ducking he had met with. It was, indeed, a most extraordinary escape.

"*Poveretto*," said Donna Giulia, "*che terribile disgrazia.*" Benedict, notwithstanding the accident, as soon as his luggage arrived—we had brought it with us—dressed and went to rehearsal at the Theatre Royal.

Italian Opera does not always meet with great encouragement in Liverpool.

The most distinguished artists, if not very popular, fail to draw receipts sufficient to pay the expense of their engagement. I have seen a magnificent performance of Verdi's "Macbeth" given to a nearly empty house—the late lamented manager, nevertheless, enjoying the performance from his private box—biting, or apparently eating, his pocket-handkerchief, in indignation at the apathy of his fellow-townsmen in matters connected with the lyrical art. The same opera, with the same cast, having drawn immense crowds the week

before in Dublin, made the apathy of the Liverpool public all the more unaccountable. But we had no reason to complain of any such indifference on the present occasion. The names of our party had, as usual, an irresistible attraction, and the result of the week's operas was most cheering. The success was well deserved, for no expense had been spared to make the performances complete. Band and chorus had been brought down from London—new dresses made, scenery painted, and everything done as well as it could be, even in the metropolis itself. But the *ensemble* would have had no attraction without the great names of the Diva and her companions.

After the week at Liverpool, a series of the same operas was given in Manchester, with which the operatic tour terminated. The engagements of many of the artists came to an end with these performances. The costumiers and their big boxes were sent home, and our party, considerably reduced in number, commenced a concert tour the Monday after the last opera in Manchester.

Among the changes we lost our *maestro*,

Benedict, whose place was filled by one already known to all of us, as the "Sultan." Our sorrow at parting with Benedict was somewhat mitigated by the appearance of Hatton, who was warmly received by his old friends. The day he arrived he was made to sit down to the piano, and sing to Donna Giulia "The Little Fat Man," and play Mario a fugue.

"I have some words here for a song I am going to write for you," said the Sultan to Mario, taking out of his pocket-book a sheet of note-paper, which he handed to our Orpheus.

"Read them to me," said Mario; whereupon Hatton read the words of "Good-bye, sweetheart."

"Good-a-bye, sweetheart," repeated Mario, with that pleasant foreign accent which made his singing of the subsequently well-known song so dreadfully interesting to his fair admirers.

"*Vi piacciono le parole?*" said the Sultan, in answer to which Mario declared he thought the verses charming.

We were all standing round the pianoforte. After a short prelude, Hatton asked us to listen

to the way in which he proposed setting the poetry, and played the song through from memory.

"'I could-a-not—leave thee—thee,' *è difficile assai quel* thee," said Mario, singing the refrain. "'I could-a-not leave thee—though'—*ancora quel* though, 'I said, Good-a-bye, sweetheart, good-a-bye.'"

"That's a hit," said the Impresario, who had been listening attentively to Hatton. "Let us hear it again."

The request being complied with, the music was liked better the second than the first time.

Mario studied the words carefully until he had completely mastered the difficulties of *th*, and learnt the verses off by heart.

"Will you sing it?" asked the Sultan.

"Certainly I will, if you do not think my English will be laughed at," replied the modest tenor.

It was then decided that the ballad should be included in the programmes of the concerts to be given during the projected tour. The success it met with is known to every one. The difference

in the reading of this song by Mario and Sims Reeves is remarkable—both equally effective. The one sings it with a *suaviter in modo* that might reasonably be supposed would break a fair damsel's heart at such a parting—the other, with a *fortiter in re* as soul-stirring and vigorous as any sweetheart could possibly desire.

Donna Giulia agreed with the Impresario as to the probable success of the song.

I never knew Grisi wrong in this respect. She has an instinctive power of foretelling the impression a new singer or new music will make upon the public. Her judgment is rarely at fault. Her opinion of Alboni, after hearing the great contralto sing only a few notes of recitative *sotto voce* was confirmed by the enthusiasm of the audience at the opening of Covent Garden in 1847.

She often predicted the success of Arditi and his music, long before that clever musician arrived in this country.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The new tour began in the South of England, and we had to leave Manchester (which none of us much regretted) for Cheltenham, where the first concert was to take place. We started by the Saturday night mail train, after the opera, intending to remain the next day at Birmingham, as being nearer our ultimate destination.

Our night journey was not without excitement. The opera was over soon enough to enable us to have supper at the hotel before leaving. The principal dish, macaroni *à la* Mario, as it had been christened, met with the full approval of our Sultan, who, in his old place as vice-president, distributed the delicious compound with all solemnity.

It was Benedict's farewell, and a very tender leave-taking took place at table. In due time we went to the railway and secured two carriages

for our exclusive use—not a matter of difficulty, there being but few other passengers to interfere with us. The Sultan, who had undertaken the part of *cavalier servente* to the Diva, was laden with shawls, furs, and *petits paquets*, which he deposited on the seats of the carriage their owner was to occupy. We proceeded to take our places, and make ourselves as comfortable as possible under the disadvantages inseparable from night travelling.. Hatton took possession of the seat opposite Donna Giulia. The other places were occupied respectively by Mario, the Impresario, and another traveller. We were all more or less fatigued, and soon after the journey had commenced, fell asleep. We must have been about an hour on the road when we awoke in great confusion — the Sultan embracing the *prima donna*, Mario's cigar knocked out of his mouth, the Impresario and the other passenger bunting their heads violently together, the lamp extinguished. The train had come to a sudden stop.

"*Siamo tutti morti!*"

"Good heavens, what's the matter?" exclaimed the Diva and Hatton together.

Something serious had happened, but we knew not what.

The engine was screaming loudly—the guards and engineers shouting to each other.

"Let us out!" cried the Sultan. But there was no one to obey the imperious command. Not any information could be obtained as to the cause of the catastrophe, or what was going on.

"I shall get out," said Hatton.

"How will you do it?" asked the Impresario. "The door's locked."

"I'll get through the window." Whereupon the original Little Fat Man, putting his threat into execution, squeezed himself out of the carriage.

"Don't leave us here, Hatton," said the Impresario to Hatton, who by this time was walking on the line.

"I'll go and get a key," he replied. But Donna Giulia thought that what Hatton could manage, she might do; and accordingly performed the same feat of getting through the window. Those who were left in the carriage

had the satisfaction of seeing the two who had escaped, scramble on all-fours up the steep embankment — the Sultan hindermost, gallantly assisting the lady in her ascent, to the best of his ability.

"Where are we, and what's happened?" said the manager to a guard who came to the carriage door.

"Nothing much, sir. It might have been very serious, but we stopped the train just in time. We run into some coal trucks."

"Is that all?" said the other traveller. "Never mind, I have been very much hurt, and shall make the Insurance company pay me handsomely."

On saying which, he pulled out a threepenny ticket of the "Accidental Death Insurance Company." From that time the speaker played his part—and played it well. He was not at first quite certain where he was injured, but ultimately decided that his heart was affected by the alarm, and that the blow he had received from the Impresario's head had very much damaged his brain. This fiction was, I believe, successfully

sustained, until a round sum had been drawn out of the company aforesaid.

Mario, satisfied as to the safety of Donna Giulia, and being more comfortable inside the carriage than on the embankment, lighted a cigar and resigned himself to circumstances.

We were delayed an hour and a half when the guard returned to us, and persuaded the Diva and her *cavalier servente* to resume their seats. This being done, the train began to move slowly along, and continued at such a snail-pace, it seemed as though the engine shared our alarm, and was afraid to go at its usual speed. In time we reached Crewe, where the ladies of the party proposed we should remain, instead of going on to Birmingham. The railway officials were on the alert. It was known there had been a mishap, and the arrival of the train was awaited with anxiety. One of the engine-drivers had been severely injured, and was promptly attended to by a medical man, who, notwithstanding the late hour, quickly came to his assistance. Rooms were taken at the station hotel, which we completely filled, and, having seen all the rest provided for, Hatton

and the Impresario consulted Bradshaw to decide how we were to proceed on our broken journey next day.

"A most lucky escape," said the Sultan.

"Indeed it was," replied the manager. "I never was so astonished," he continued, "as when I awoke and found the carriage in darkness and confusion."

"Nor I, as when I discovered myself in Donna Giulia's lap," said Hatton.

"What are you going to claim for damages?" asked the Impresario of the lucky possessor of the threepenny ticket, who was sitting in a corner.

"Five hundred pounds at least," was the reply.

"What for?" exclaimed the manager.

"Because I have a heart complaint, and it might have killed me!"

"But you were less hurt than any of us."

"Perhaps so, but I was more frightened, and am still."

"You are quite right to say so," said the Impresario; "but I should advise you to sprain

your arm, break your leg, or bruise your head. You'll never get £500 for a heart complaint."

"Won't I? you'll see."

The speaker relapsed into his pensive mood, and soon sauntered off to bed, where, he told us afterwards, he dreamt he was a director of the Accidental Death Insurance Company, and had consequently a heart complaint in real earnest.

CHAPTER XXX.

"This place has many historical recollections for me," remarked the Impresario to Hatton, as they were sitting over the fire, waiting for their rooms to be got ready.

"How so?" asked the Sultan. "I never saw it mentioned particularly in any book."

"I dare say not," continued the first speaker, "and perhaps the incidents I allude to are hardly worth remembering. However, I always think of them when I pass the station. It was here," he continued, "that I came from Dublin post-haste for a tenor. The telegraph did not reach further than Crewe in those days. I remember how astonished the telegraph clerk was when he read the message to my people in town, 'Send me a tenor who can sing "Lucia," "Linda," and "Sonnambula," at once, at any terms.' He couldn't make it out at all, and it was enough

to puzzle any one not versed in theatrical emergencies. I arrived here at midnight, waited till ten next morning, when I received my answer giving the name of the article in request; then started back to Dublin, where I was in time to issue the announcements next day. It was considered quick work in those times, but would be thought now very slow. My next experience at Crewe was of a more agreeable nature. I was travelling with Piccolomini. We had been away from London three weeks. The dear little lady was pining—love-sick—at the absence of the *marchese* to whom she was about to be married. They had agreed to meet in Dublin. Our last concert before going to Ireland was at Bradford on the Saturday. Piccolomini was most impatient to reach the Emerald Isle, as you may suppose. As soon as the concert was over, she insisted upon starting. I knew the train we should travel by, and that it would meet the London express for Holyhead at this station. I wrote to the Marquis Gaetani—a delightful fellow. Did you ever meet him?"

"No," replied Hatton.

"I wrote and told him to look out for me at Crewe. As soon as we arrived here I saw him on the platform. He opened the door of our carriage. I never shall forget the surprise and joy of Piccolomini. It was a burst of feeling that did one's heart good to witness. The love-sick maiden who, the moment before, had been sighing, sad and silent, was now radiant with smiles, and apparently overwhelmed with happiness—all the greater, perhaps, from being so completely unexpected. Her mother, who was sitting in a further corner of the carriage and not seeing the Marquis, thought the young *prima donna* had gone mad.

"'*Marietta! Marietta! che cosa fai?*' she screamed.

"'*Ma non vedi, mamma, chi è qui?*'" she replied, jumping into the arms of the delighted Marquis and smothering him with kisses.

"The cause of all the commotion was soon apparent to mamma, who was almost as rejoiced to see her future son-in-law as the intended bride herself."

"We must get away early to-morrow, or rather

this morning," said the Sultan, taking up a bedroom candle; "let us go and sleep off the effects of that horrid shaking. Where's old Threepenny Ticket?"

"He has gone long ago," replied the manager. "Singular circumstance that the two conductors should have been nearly killed within the week," he continued, as they were going upstairs.

"Very; I think I got the best off," said Hatton. "I wonder where our rooms are?"

"No. 22 and No. 6, the waiter told me," replied the manager. "What about our being called?"

"That must be put down on the slate," answered Hatton, turning round to go to the hall and write instructions for the next morning. "What time shall we say?"

"Eight o'clock is soon enough, I think," said the manager.

"No. 22 and No. 6—eight o'clock; all right," and the two travellers then proceeded to explore the dark corridors of the hotel in search of their rooms. The house was not very large, and the apartments were soon found.

When the Impresario came down next morning he found Polonini, who was already at breakfast, in loud conversation with the waiter. The latter, to whom Italian was an unknown tongue, was trying to make the basso understand what he said by shouting at him.

"Dear me," said the manager, "what is all this noise about?"

"No noise, sir," replied the waiter, bowing and scraping; "the gentleman doesn't speak English, that's all, sir. What shall I get you for breakfast, sir?"

"What have you got?" asked the Impresario.

"Hanything you like to horder, sir," replied the officious waiter.

"I think I should like a chop," said the manager, musingly.

"No chops in the house I fear, sir; too soon for chops, sir. Heggs and bacon, sir, or hanything helse you like, sir."

"Then let me have a little fish."

"What fish, sir?" said the waiter, unhesitatingly.

"A sole fried, I think," replied the hungry manager.

"No sole in the house, sir. Heggs fried with bacon, if you please, sir."

There was evidently no alternative but to order the eggs and bacon, as suggested.

He was a wag in his way, that waiter. Finding shouting made no progress with his foreign customers, he addressed some in broken English, as being nearer than his own dialect to what they were supposed to know of our language. Shortly the Diva, followed by Gennaro and the rest of the party, made their appearance in full force at table. The waiter received them with much pomp and ceremony, insisted on their ordering what they liked, and ended in making all take eggs and bacon.

"Good morning," said the Sultan, the last to come down.

"*Buon giorno*," replied Donna Giulia, for all the party.

"Come, Hatton, we shall be late for the train," said the manager. "Never knew you so late before."

"I overslept myself and relied on you calling me," replied the Sultan, reproachfully.

The waiter addressed the last comer with all due respect, and after a similar conference to that which has been related above, ended in bringing Hatton a substantial supply of eggs and bacon.

"What is to be seen at Crewe?" asked Donna Giulia, addressing the Impresario.

"Not much, I think," he replied. "I believe the railway station is the chief attraction."

"Let us go and see if there are any shops; I want to buy something for the children."

This, indeed, was Donna Giulia's first thought upon arriving anywhere. I often wondered what became of all the dresses, toys and nicknacks that were sent home from every town we visited during the tour. Making purchases, and correspondence either by letter or telegraph—very often both on the same day—seemed to be the only thought of the affectionate *prima donna*. If anything prevented her receiving news from home, the effect of the delay was immediately apparent — she became silent and thoughtful;

if, on the other hand, more letters than were expected arrived, her spirits were raised in consequence, and she was the life and soul of the party.

CHAPTER XXXI.

We left Crewe by the ten o'clock train.

"I hope we shall not meet with another accident," remarked the Impresario to Hatton, as they started.

"If we do, I've taken a threepenny ticket after what I heard last night," was the reply. "Our friend has gone up to town to consult his lawyer and his doctor as to the £500," continued the manager.

"*Che notizie?*" asked the Diva, as Mario unfolded the newspaper.

"More companies," remarked Hatton, who was reading the money article of the *Times*.

"'The cry is still, they come,'" said a stranger in the carriage.

"Yes," said Hatton, "they'll come to a smash some day; there are too many of them."

"All of them put together," continued the

other speaker, "are nothing to the South Sea Bubble."

"That's gone and forgotten," said the Sultan.

"Truly, but it was a larger company than we dream of in these days," replied the traveller.

"Larger than the railway companies?" exclaimed a third.

"Ay, indeed. The capital was ten millions, and that, by the premiums at which the original stock was issued, was increased to nearly three hundred millions."

"Three hundred millions sterling?" asked Donna Giulia, who had been listening to the conversation.

"It was an extraordinary affair in every respect," continued the narrator, encouraged by the interest evinced by his celebrated travelling companions to give them all the information he could upon the subject. "The king, George I., was governor of the company, which proposed to pay off the English National Debt. In one year, 1719, between March and September, the £100 shares rose to £1100 premium, and fell to £86 below par. The ruin that these fluctuations brought

upon speculators and investors was fearful. Maitland the historian says, that such a scene of misery appeared among traders that it was almost unfashionable not to be a bankrupt, and the dire catastrophe was attended with such a number of suicides as no age can parallel. An interesting story of the bursting of the South Sea Bubble is told in Hone's 'Every Day Book' of a gentleman calling late one evening at the banking-house of Hankey & Co. He was in a coach, but refused to get out, and desired that one of the partners of the house would come to him. Having ascertained that it was really one of the principals, and not a clerk, who appeared, he put into his hands a parcel very carefully sealed up, and desired that it might be laid on one side till he should call again. A few days passed away—a few weeks—a few months; but the stranger never returned. At the end of the second or third year the partners agreed to open this mysterious parcel in the presence of each other. They found it to contain £30,000, with a letter stating it was obtained by the South Sea speculation, and directing that it should be vested in the hands of three trustees,

whose names were mentioned, and the interest appropriated to the relief of the poor, which was accordingly done."

"I think I shall apply for a share in it," said the Impresario.

"What is the sum invested in public companies since the passing of your Limited Liability Act?" asked Mario, addressing the South Sea authority in French.

"The capital authorised for companies which have come before the public for subscription since 1863 is 374 millions, or thereabouts," replied the financial traveller, who appeared to be a City man. "In railways," he continued, "we have very nearly 456 millions paid up and in debentures."

"Very interesting details," remarked Hatton; "as you say, no company of the present day equals the magnitude of the South Sea scheme."

"No, and a very remarkable feature in that gigantic affair is, that it was formed upon the plan of the Mississippi bubble, which a few years previously had spread such desolation among the French people."

"In financial matters we seem to follow the French at some distance, and do not profit by their experience," remarked the Impresario; "our financial companies are taken from them."

"They are, in a measure," replied the City man; "but I fancy the French are behind us in banking matters generally. As, for instance, the cheque system is almost unknown to them, or has only very partially been adopted."

The conversation at this point began to flag. Our tourists appeared to take no further interest in money matters, and left the City man to make his observations to himself.

We soon reached Birmingham, where an early dinner was prepared for us; after which we continued the route to Cheltenham. The local concert giver was in great alarm at the non-arrival of the party by the train he expected they would travel. He had sent often to the Plough Hotel, making anxious inquiries, and expressed himself greatly relieved when told we were all right, and ready for the evening's hard work. At the hour for the concert to commence, a Bath chair was wheeled into the hall of the hotel; Donna

Giulia, amused at the novel (or rather ancient) mode of conveyance, took her seat in the hand-carriage, and was dragged into the artists' room adjoining the concert hall.

More than one chair was wanted, for some of the party were curious to try the vehicle, as was once the case in the city of Bath, where a sedan chair being brought for the prima donna, all the party insisted upon being carried to the concert in the same old fashion. They objected to being brought back in the same way, declaring the movement had a most unpleasant effect upon them, being more or less like a sea voyage.

The concert was crowded, which pleased the Impresario; the audience were enthusiastic, which pleased the performers; the performers exerted themselves to the utmost, which pleased the audience; the new ballad was a success, which pleased the Sultan—so that our visit to Cheltenham was, in whatever light considered, a most pleasing event to all concerned.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE concert-tour, begun so pleasantly at Cheltenham, continued for six weeks, during which time the party visited almost every town of importance in the United Kingdom. They had been joined by a lady who performed on the harmonium. The tall chair she carried about with her as part and parcel of her luggage, afforded us much amusement. Without this chair, she declared, it was impossible for her to exhibit her remarkable skill on the instrument of her choice. No other perch would suit the amiable performer. It had been made expressly for her in Paris, and was apparently the object of her greatest solicitude. The distress of mind she evinced one day at a station where we had to change carriages, and lost the chair, was heart-rending. For safety's sake the valuable bit of furniture had been placed on the top of the carriage in which we travelled.

On alighting, the chair was forgotten, perhaps intentionally, until the train we had left moved on. Suddenly the lady seized Mario, who was waiting patiently for the next train to come up, by the arms.

"*Ma chaise!*" she screamed. "*Regardez ma chaise! Mon dieu! mon dieu! que ferai-je?*" There was the chair on the roof of the carriage, going off in the very opposite direction to which its owner intended. Nothing could be done, the harmonium performer that evening had to be supported by music books and cushions.

The harmonium itself occasionally gave the lady trouble enough. It is a sort of musical treadmill, on which the performer has to work incessantly. The long dress she wore concealed to some extent the motion of her feet; but a close observer could easily detect their constant movement, and might wonder how such exertion, combined with that of playing on the two rows of keys, could be kept up so long and with such a smiling face as that which the lady always displayed. Sometimes a note would stick down, and keep on sounding through her performance. This

gave her great annoyance, and she would look most imploringly for aid from her companions, one of whom would always run to her assistance, and put the recreant note into its proper position while she went on playing. This sticking propensity was catching, and after the harmonium had been out two or three weeks—it usually followed us about as well as the chair—it became such an epidemic among the notes, that it was found necessary for one of the party to sit beside the performer to put up the notes as she put them down—carrying on, in fact, a sort of double performance, the effect of which was lost upon the public. Had this not been done, most of the notes would have kept on sounding as long as the harmonium had any breath in its body—a double performance, which might or might not have been pleasing to the audience, but which would certainly have been sufficiently apparent. The first time the failing was observed was in the finale to one of the concerts, sung and played by the whole strength of the company, including the harmonium. The combination was most effective, but seriously jeopardised by the note F natural refusing to rise

when struck. In the noise of the *ensemble* it was not much noticed, but when the soprano had to sing her solo in a key to which F natural has no relation, the obstinate note became unpleasantly prominent. A frown clouded the lady's usually beaming countenance—she was in despair—the singers turned round, and at last one of them helped F natural into its place, and then all went smoothly again.

The daily routine of our touring life became at last monotonous. This will, perhaps, appear paradoxical, considering we were a large party, and visited new scenes every day. Nevertheless, it was so, or, at any rate, very nearly so. Not but what it was a pleasant monotony.

The society of artists is at all times delightful: their accomplishments afford a never-failing source of social enjoyment—their experience in the world makes them philosophers in spite of themselves; they wear no disguise in private life; warm and hearty in their friendships, none are so ready and willing to help each other as they. The jealousies that are said to exist among them are much exaggerated, and are found only in those whose

mediocrity places them in a position inferior to that which conceit alone convinces them it is their right to occupy. These aspirants to a reputation beyond their reach are of course jealous of their more gifted brethren; and yet it is not natural gifts only that enable artists to become men of mark. Work—hard work, is indispensable in the struggle for distinction. Those who indulge in an overweening confidence of their own natural ability to ensure success are, of all people, the most likely to fail, and be most jealous of the rest.

An artist who loves his art is a young man all his life, though he live a hundred years. Art is a mistress faithful both in prosperity and adversity —a very solace and comfort in loneliness or misfortune. She encourages the ardour of the youth who woos her with the most fascinating allurements, rewarding his courtship with the sunniest and most lasting smiles.

The grey-haired painter, brush in hand, while realising his fancy's dream, knows but the maturity of experience—not that of age. And so it is with the poet, singer, musician, or any other

sincere votary of the same enchantress. Cicero's well-known words, in his oration, "De Archiâ," in praise of literary studies are equally applicable to artistic pursuits:—"*Hæc studia adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant; secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent; delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur.*"

Even a little knowledge of art is better than none at all. The amateur participates to a certain extent in the exquisite pleasure of the artist. Who would relinquish the most trifling proficiency he may have attained in either painting or music? What enjoyment can the accumulation of any amount of wealth afford, compared with that of being able to express one's innermost thoughts on canvas or in melody? The matter-of-fact man of business, or merely "muscular Christian," may sneer at such rapture; but as age creeps on, and the more material joys of life lose their charm, those who have cultivated an intellectual source of happiness in early years will have less cause to regret the physical zest of youth, than they who considered the pursuit of art as being beneath the dignity of

their manhood. Nevertheless, amateurs—musical amateurs especially—are, it must be confessed, more or less a trouble to their friends.

> "As when three gentlemen who love to sing,
> And always rolls of music with them bring,
> Stand up—to please themselves (at least not me)
> By the performance of a worn-out glee;
> * * * * * *
> Now they begin—they beat the talking hollow
> While they give out their 'Glorious Apollo'!"

It must be borne in mind that I do not here speak of the power of artists or amateurs of imparting pleasure to others, but of the pleasure they themselves derive from a proficiency in art. It may also be said that these remarks apply to a liberal education generally. As regards the second objection, I believe it to be within the reach of all to cultivate their artistic tastes, whatever advantages of education they may have enjoyed or have been deprived of.

I would not have it supposed that by thus advocating the culture of art, I do so at the sacrifice of the more solid and more serious pursuits of life. All in their turn. The stern necessities of existence being provided for, I contend that the

luxury of art as an accomplishment should be a most important consideration with all those who care to enjoy life with the greatest and most enduring relish.

The monotony of our tour consisted in having to go through the same course of travelling, packing and unpacking, eating and drinking, and concert-giving every day, until at last the changes became so regular and so much a matter of course, that we seemed to be moving in a constant circle. The excitement of the people we met at the different towns sometimes surprised us, forgetting, as we did, that they were not so accustomed as we were to the performances we had now heard so often. During the third week—the music being left behind—Hatton's memory was put to the test, and proved itself equal to the emergency; for he accompanied the whole of the programme by heart—no easy task. An instance of the influence of habit occurred at the same concert. One of the artists, so certain of an encore, returned to the platform to sing his song again without being called upon to do so by the audience. For this encore the public was certainly not to blame.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MANY were the practical jokes played upon the amiable Polonini, who was too good-natured to allow them to ruffle his temper, and too knowing always to give us the advantage of him. He was put down to be called at the most unreasonable hours, and directions given to "boots" to be sure and wake him, and *keep* waking him until he roused and dressed himself. It was done, but the cunning medico-cook-basso (whose occupations, except in his last capacity had, unfortunately for us, ceased for some time) never grumbled nor said a word of the disturbance to which he had been exposed. A deeply-laid scheme was put into execution for filling his room with all the boots and shoes that could be found, at three o'clock in the morning, in Radley's large Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. The conspirators sat up all

night to execute their plan. The boots were collected from outside every door, and most carefully and silently placed on Polonini's bed. He was sound asleep, or rather appeared to be so, for as soon as his friends had retired he quietly rang the bell and desired the night porter to remove the heap that had been piled up upon his counterpane. Next morning the laugh was all against the night freebooters, who were thus frustrated in the result of their plans. Polonini was too much for them. Once, and once only, he was caught. An anonymous letter was sent him requesting an assignation. Gallantry got the better of prudence, and the chivalrous basso obeyed the wishes of his unknown *innamorata*. It need hardly be told that his old tormentors were at the rendezvous. Having bribed a most strangely ugly female to represent the letter-writer, they watched from a distance the result of the interview. It was the well-known bridge scene in "Jack Brag" over again. There was no great harm done, and we had a hearty laugh for many a day about the *bella incognita*.

The tour terminated at Brighton.

The last concert took place at Brighton on Saturday afternoon. The previous evening we had been at Reading. As early as seven o'clock on the Saturday morning the Diva was ready and anxious to start. On every other occasion, when early rising was proposed, it had much annoyed her, although in truth, it must be said, she had never on that account set a bad example to the rest of the party by any want of energy to fulfil the public announcements of her name. There was a special reason for leaving Reading as soon as possible. Many inquiries were indeed made for a train immediately after the evening concert, but it was found that none would reach Brighton sooner than the seven A.M. Consequently by that we travelled. The journey seemed long and tedious, owing to the great desire to get to Brighton, where, to the joy of Donna Giulia, the three children were waiting at the station in anxious expectation of our arrival. During the tour they had been staying at Brighton with their governess, whose principal occupation must have been to attend to the voluminous correspondence by post

and telegraph that had been kept up with such activity during Donna Giulia's absence. What smiles and kisses were interchanged at that meeting after six weeks' separation! Grisi seemed inspired with new life, and to want nothing to complete her earthly happiness.

The concert that afternoon was the most brilliant of all that had been given, although at Reading in the morning the Impresario had been assured by the great prima donna she was in very bad voice. Any other manager would perhaps have been much alarmed at such a communication. Our hero, however, was—so to speak—weather-wise, and knew that huskiness in the morning was no indication of hoarseness during the day, but rather the reverse. This was invariably the case with the Diva. She would often tell the Impresario she did not think she should be able to sing in the evening. He usually succeeded in turning the conversation into another channel—talked of the last night's performance—of the children (always the best subject to expatiate upon), and after ten minutes' chat, the hoarseness would be forgotten, and all

anxiety as to the possibility of singing passed away.

Grisi never failed to appear when she was announced, unless really prevented by serious indisposition;—no singer was ever so loyal in her allegiance to the public, although she took delight in frightening an Impresario now and then. It is an innocent amusement often indulged in by *prime donne*. When in Vienna a few years ago, I met one of the principal *artistes* of the Kärntherthor Opera House, who told me she had sent word to the theatre that she should not sing that evening.

"Not sing!" I exclaimed. "But you are announced, and will not surely disappoint us?"

"No, I will not disappoint you," replied the fair tantalizer, "only let *Mein Herr Direktor* think so;—half an hour's '*bauchzwicken*' will do him no harm."

And so it is. An unfortunate Impresario is sometimes made to suffer mortal agony from pure love of mischief on the part of his tormentors, who, after all, rarely do him serious injury

willingly. On the contrary, artists often make great sacrifices to serve their managers. It is related of Tamberlik—a prince of tenors—that he played "*Ernani*," in Dublin, with a blister on his back. The blister had been sent by the chemist in mistake for a strengthening-plaster which the doctor had prescribed. After the opera, Tamberlik went to his bed in the most intense pain—the true cause of which was not suspected. About three in the morning, unable to resist such suffering any longer, he rose and wandered about the hotel until he found the Impresario's room. He entered, and flinging himself down on the sofa, fainted away. The blister was removed, and the wound dressed.

Notwithstanding all he had undergone, and his weakened condition, the heroic tenor sang in "*Lucia*" the following evening, rather than allow the Impresario to lose anything by a disappointment caused by the *prima donna* of the company.

The termination of our tour was celebrated by a dinner *en grand*, at the famous Old Ship Hotel, Brighton. Several friends from London were

invited to join the party. Their presence seemed to mar our enjoyment, rather than otherwise, although it is perhaps inhospitable to say so.

To whatever cause it may be attributed, we were certainly more silent than usual; and it was not until after the eating was over, and we had formed ourselves into small coteries round the table, that the conversation became at all animated.

A creaking door once broke the ice for a time. It made a horrid noise, and one of the guests asked the Sultan what key it sounded.

"Oh! that's the *door*-key," he replied; which being the first attempt at wit, and easily translated, was explained to everybody.

"That's not bad," remarked the Impresario; "but not so good as a repartee I heard a short time ago, much to my disadvantage."

"What was that?" asked one of the visitors, who was evidently a retailer of witty sayings.

"I was what is commonly called 'chaffing' a young lady about her dress, and, thinking I had gone a little too far, attempted to apologise, by saying it was too bad to 'roast' her so much.

To which she replied with *naïveté*, that she had no objection to being roasted by a *slow* fire."

"If that was really *impromptu*, it is one of the best repartees I ever heard," remarked Hatton.

"It is, indeed. I do not think a better could have been made even after twenty-four hours' reflection, which Voltaire, or some one, says is necessary to make a really good joke," replied the manager.

Many of the foreigners wanted to have the *bon mot* translated, but "roasted at a slow fire" was too purely English to allow of their curiosity being gratified, so they were thrown back upon the door-key, which was more intelligible in all languages.

Meanwhile one of the visitors related to Hatton, as a sort of "rider" to the two preceding witticisms, how Douglas Jerrold, on being asked to an evening party, and requested to come in good spirits, said he would come in "spirits of wine." Whether this really belongs to the great humorist, I cannot say; there's no doubt he gets credit for many good and bad jokes he never dreamt of, just as a criminal who is proved to have com-

mitted one murder, is at once said to be guilty of many more.

It was, perhaps, lucky that the polyglot character of the dinner-party prevented the possibility of conundrums being introduced with any chance of success—had it been otherwise, and had one of the guests met with the slightest encouragement, the foregoing conversation might have led up to a series of questions and answers, that would in the end have worn out everybody.

All the party, except Grisi and Mario, who remained in Brighton, were to go to London by the last train.

The moment at length arrived when the touring party was really to be broken up.

The "happy family" that had been travelling together in such pleasant companionship for the past six weeks, was at last to be separated and dispersed all over the world. Some of the artists were engaged at St. Petersburg, some in Paris—two were to leave in the course of a few days for America.

Three or four cabs laden with luggage were waiting for the departing tourists. The ladies

embraced affectionately; Mario presented the Sultan with a handsome snuff-box—*souvenir* of "Good-bye, Sweetheart"—everybody declared they were sorry the tour was over, and after kind wishes on all sides, the cabs drove off, and the manager could finally congratulate himself that his long-laid plans had been brought to a successful termination. He was, indeed, fully justified in doing so, for it is not always that these undertakings finish so agreeably for all concerned, as did this particular Grisi and Mario engagement.

We will not follow the travellers to London. Should we return there it is impossible to say where the doings of the enterprising Impresario would lead us, and consequently where this *talk* would end.

It has been merely talk, and that without any plan or other motive than to amuse. Perhaps even that object has been too ambitious, and not attained. I can hardly hope that these recollections will have the same interest for any reader that they have for me. In my memory they are inseparably associated with the dearest

and best of friends—with one whose gentle life was passed in the devoted service of the art he loved. He made every sacrifice in its behalf. In a position created by his own energy, he sought out and fostered talent with an indomitable spirit, which overcame all obstacles. He was the first in this country to recognise the genius of Mendelssohn. He took Balfe, Wallace, Macfarren, Benedict, Silas, and every other composer of his day by the hand; the reputation and compositions of Thalberg, Meyerbeer, and Hector Berlioz became familiar in this country through his intervention. It was he who first brought together the pianoforte works of Beethoven in a complete form. He founded musical societies. Every artist of merit and repute was, at some time or another, associated with him. It is said that no man dies but his place is at once filled up. That may be, but men less worthy are often substituted for those who are taken from us. Assuredly, to me, his loss can never be repaired.

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